

A SPECIAL EDITION FROM THE MAKERS OF PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

THE UK'S BESTSELLING PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE



PlayStation 2

SPECIAL EDITION: SPORTS GAMES



**132 PAGE SPORT-ACULAR STARRING EVERY PS2 SPORTING GREAT!
40 REVIEWS! 24 PREVIEWS! SPORT-TASTIC FEATURES!**

**IT'S THE ULTIMATE SPORTS PACKAGE
GET STUCK IN – YOU'LL HAVE A BALL!**

INSIDE

- MASSIVE REVIEWS, FEATURES, TIPS & PREVIEWS OF PS2'S BIGGEST SPORT STARS!
- THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF SPORTS GAMES. TOP TEN GREATEST SPORTING HEROES
- WIN WORLD CUP DVDS! FREE CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP WORLD CUP MASKS AND MORE!



JUNE 2002

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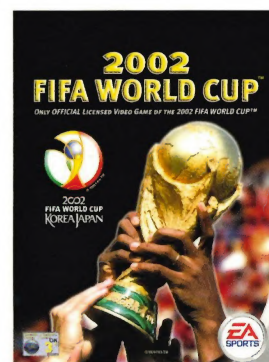
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PC CD-ROM



PlayStation 2



it's in the game

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EDITOR'S LETTER



World Of Sport

It's not a bad summer for sport is it? We've got the planet's greatest sporting extravaganza, the World Cup, and the prospect of every England player being injured and having to bring Geoff Thomas and Carlton Palmer out of retirement. Wimbledon is on the horizon and, if we're lucky, there'll be a flash or seven of Kournikova's knickers. Test cricket, the World Rally Championship, Lewis Vs Tyson, Formula One, the Commonwealth Games – chances are, if you're not sitting in front of the box watching sport this summer, you'll be sitting in front of the box reliving all that sporting action with your PS2 games.

And if you want to know which sports games you should be playing, then you've certainly bought the right magazine. We've got 50 pages of reviews covering all the games worth owning across every conceivable sporting genre. From the fantasy football of *Pro Evolution Soccer* to the grappling madness of *WWF SmackDown*, the adrenaline-pumping extreme action of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* to the tennis temptress *Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament*, you won't find a more comprehensive guide to the PS2 sporting world anywhere!

But our sport-tacular doesn't stop with the reviews. You can drool over previews of *Freestyle*, *Colin McRae Rally 3* and all the other sports stars coming to PS2 later in the year. Reminisce about *Sensible World Of Soccer* and *Track 'n' Field* in *Action Replay* – our in-depth look at the history of the sports game. We've got huge *Pro Evo* and *Tony Hawk's 3* tips guides, interviews with McRae and Mat Hoffman, a sports quiz with the chance to win *The Legend of the FIFA World Cup* DVD boxsets. And if you're face is now quivering with sports overload you can even cover it up with our fantastic cut-out-and-keep masks of England heroes Becks, Owen and Sven!

PS. Arsenal, it's only on loan you know?

Lee

LEE HART
Editor

ART EDITOR

ALVIN WEETMAN



To the world of sport what Ulrika Jonsson is to keeping her pants on, Alv's distaste for all things exercise-based caused him to break out in a rash at the very thought of designing a sports magazine. Recently banned from a pasty and spoon race for injecting 100% pure Cornish potato chunks.

CONTRIBUTORS

KEITH STUART



Claims to be a big football fan and yet supports Man City, if you discover any references to Ali Bernaba in the mag then you know who to blame. As a side effect from writing our history of the sports game feature *Action Replay* (page 78), Keith is currently inseparable from his shell suit.

SIMON MIDDLEWEEK



Described by 'friends' as looking like a cross between 'A chimp and Stan Boardman', at no time did Simon bare his teeth in the office or complain about Germans bombing chippies. He did, however, moan about the blisters caused by cutting out 10 masks for our 'On Me 'Ead Son!' photoshoot (page 90).

JEZ BRIDGEMAN



The proud owner of a new labrador puppy (called Billy), Jez has been getting plenty of exercise recently, shuffling after the mutt when it scarpers with his Andrex. Among many others pages, Jez did a fine job with our (ahem) *Questions Of Sport* quiz (page 86).

PlayStation®2

SPECIAL EDITION: SPORTS GAMES

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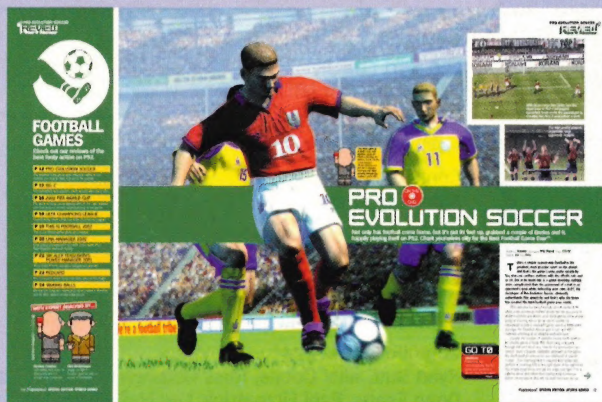
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REVIEWS



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FOOTBALL GAMES

Reviews of all the best footy playing and managing games, including Pro Evolution Soccer, FIFA World Cup 2002 and LMA Manager 2002.



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ALLSPORTS

A reviews smorgasbord of all the great sports games we couldn't categorise elsewhere, from Smash Court Tennis to Cricket 2002.



PAGE 28-33

COMBAT SPORTS

Enter the ring and taste the pain administered by PS2 hardcases WWF SmackDown! Mike Tyson Boxing and Knockout Kings 2002.



PAGE 44-57

EXTREME SPORTS

Adrenaline junkies prepare to get high on a massive reviews grind that includes SSX Tricky, Tony Hawk's 3 and Dave Mirra BMX 2.

PAGE 58-64

MOTOR SPORTS

Get your motor running with all the best motor racing sims on PS2. Formula One 2001, World Rally Championship, Moto GP 2 and more.

PAGE 66-69

AMERICAN SPORTS

It's a big high-five for all the stat-heavy sports our US cousins like to whoop at. Madden NFL 2002, NHL 2002, NBA Live and NBA Street.

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SPORTS CRAZY!

If you can whack a points system or a finish line on something, then you've got a sport. That's the theory anyway, these bizarre sports games attempt to put it into practise...

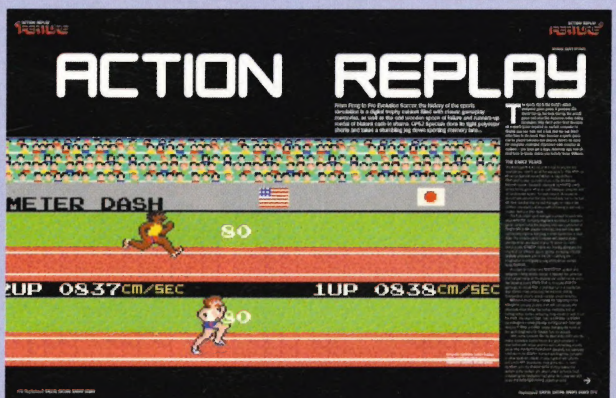
FEATURES



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TOP 10 SPORTING HEROES

Find out who makes our countdown of the ten greatest icons in the history of sport. Should Ali take the title? Can Pele dribble past his challengers? Will Ade Akinbiyi make a surprise appearance?!



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ACTION REPLAY

We chart the complete history of the sports game from its humble origins with Pong right through to the PS2's amazing sports stars.

QUESTIONS OF SPORT

SPOT-THE-BALL

PICTURE BOARD

MYSTERY GUEST

MATCH-MIX-UP

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QUESTIONS OF SPORT

Take on our tricky sports quiz – covering both real sports and sports games – for the chance to win World Cup DVD boxsets!

ON ME 'EAD SON!

CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP WORLD CUP MASKS!

Get your free cut-out-and-keep World Cup masks of England heroes Becks, Owen and Sven and be the envy of all your mates!

PAGE 90-95

"ON ME 'EAD SON!"

Get your free cut-out-and-keep World Cup masks of England heroes Becks, Owen and Sven and be the envy of all your mates!

MAKE THESE GAMES!

In this world of ever more tenuous celebrity endorsements and increasingly obscure sports, it's time to finger the games we, you and every other right thinking person really wants to see...

PAGE 116-117

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PREVIEWS

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

Becks lines up a dramatic PS2 set-piece.

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Becks lines up a dramatic PS2 set-piece.

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DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

Becks lines up a dramatic PS2 set-piece.

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PREMIER MANAGER 2002

Chat-heavy, not stat-heavy, management.

PAGE 99

SEGA SPORTS TENNIS 2K2

The best tennis sim ever served onto PS2.

TOCA RACE DRIVER

Touring car racing with a Hollywood plot!

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TOCA RACE DRIVER

Touring car racing with a Hollywood plot!

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COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

The offroad daddy makes its PS2 debut.

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V-RALLY 3

Feature-packed new entry in the series.

PAGE 109

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

More rally with more cars than anyone else.

FREESTYLE

We sneak a peek at EA Sports BIG's dirt bike-er-up and meet Steve Rechtschaffner, the man behind the BIG phenomenon.

PAGE 110-111

FREESTYLE

We sneak a peek at EA Sports BIG's dirt bike-er-up and meet Steve Rechtschaffner, the man behind the BIG phenomenon.

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MATT HOFFMAN PRO BMX 2

Extreme BMX trickery and an interview with the man himself.

PAGE 114

LE TOUR DE FRANCE

The ultimate cycling contest pedals our way.

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RELEASE ROUND-UP

All the other cracking sports games coming to PS2 in the remainder of the year.

REGULARS

On the DVD

P.006
All the info on our fantastic DVD.

Hardcore P.118

Complete guides to Pro Evo Soccer and Tony Hawk's 3 plus a huge database of sports game codes, cheats and secrets!

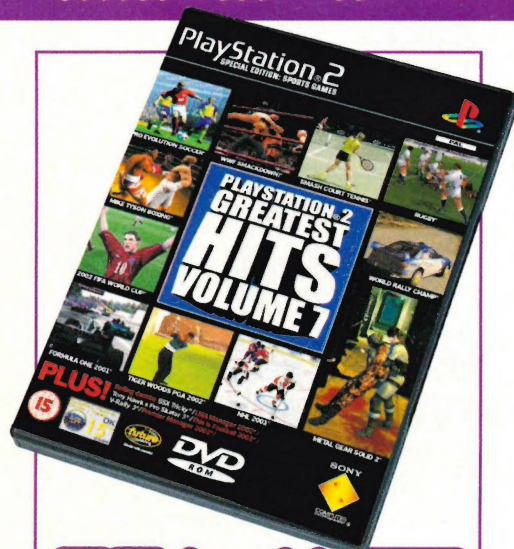
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P.129
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Find out what's in store for our next spectacular Special Edition.

ON THE DVD



THIS ISSUE!

Other magazines let you watch, only **OPS2** lets you play. **PlayStation 2 Greatest Hits Volume 7** features 11 fantastic playable demos plus eight video previews of PS2's hottest upcoming games:

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

Break terrorist necks in Solid Snake's latest blockbuster.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

The official game of this summer's festival of football.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Experience football genius courtesy of Konami.

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Knockout fighting action with the ear-munching hardnut.

WWF SMACKDOWN! 'JUST BRING IT!'

Wrestlemania pounds PS2 in this brawling bestseller.

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT

Ace arcade tennis fun with playable Anna Kournikova!

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

All-weather, all-terrain, all-action, full throttle rallying.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

Masterful golfing action with the king of the fairways.

FORMULA ONE 2001

Drive the super-fast Spa track in PS2's best F1 racer.

RUGBY

Realistic egg-chasing fun (with no fart-lighting option).

NHL 2001

Hit the ice in EA's pucking excellent hockey sim.

Plus! Six videos...

SSX Tricky, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, V-Rally 3, LMA Manager 2002, Premier Manager 2002, This Is Football 2002

PLAYABLE DEMO ONE

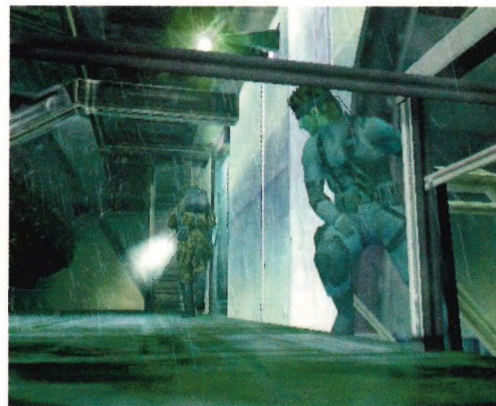
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

Publisher: **Konami** Game type: **Adventure** Out: **Now** Players: **1**

The only non-sports game in our selection, we thought you might just appreciate a spot of cinematic, stealth adventuring between games of footy and bouts of wrestling. Hideo Kojima's follow-up to his PSone classic is one of PS2's bestselling and, indeed, best games. Get stuck in and find out what all the fuss is about.

The demo

Once loaded, choose either 'New Game' or 'Special' with ↑/↓ and Ⓞ. Selecting 'Special' takes you through a guide to Snake's moves and abilities, complete with video footage of each. Choosing 'New Game' will take you to the Difficulty Select screen, so pick your setting with ↑/↓ and Ⓞ. Next, select your radar with ↑/↓ and Ⓞ again to begin the game. Watch the Intro sequence and listen to Otacon for your mission objectives, then it's time for some Solid Snake action! Your first task is to get to the ship's bridge and the showdown with Olga, but we'll leave the rest for you to discover.



Controls

- L-stick - Movement (Normal view mode)/ Camera movement (First-person view mode)
- R-stick - Change camera angle (corner view mode)
- ⓧ - Crawl/Cancel
- Ⓞ - Punch/Confirm/ Knock
- Ⓞ - Weapon or Throw/ Choke (when no weapon equipped)
- ⓐ - Action
- ⓐ - First-person view
- ⓐ - Lock-on
- ⓐ - Equip weapon/ Peek right (corner view)
- ⓐ - Equip item/Peek left (corner view)
- ⓐ - Pause
- ⓐ - Enter Codec mode



Controls

- L-stick - Move
- R-stick - One-two
- ⓧ Pass/Switch player
- Ⓢ High pass/Aggressive tackle
- Ⓢ Shoot/Tackle
- Ⓢ Sprint (tap continuously)
- Ⓢ Keeper charge/Drop ball (keeper)
- Ⓢ Step-over
- Ⓢ Ballspin left
- Ⓢ Ballspin right
- Ⓢ Pause/Options

PLAYABLE DEMO TWO

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

Publisher: **EA Sports** Game type: **Sports** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2 (Full game 1-8)**

Boasting the official FIFA license, with all the players, teams and stadiums of this summer's main event, *World Cup 2002* lets you relive the highs (and lows) of the tournament in style. Crisp visuals, authentic crowd chants, plus commentary from Andy Gray and John Motson combine to make this as close as you're likely to get to the real thing. Pick your favourites and take them all the way to cup final glory – just like the real England team, we're sure... (Cough)

The demo

Our demo features a single or two-player showdown between Spain and Mexico at the Seoul stadium in Korea. Once loaded, the demo takes you straight into the action, so press **Start** to pause the game and assign controllers 1 & 2. In multiplayer, you can opt to play against each other, or go up against the computer in a co-op match. You've got the first half of the game to see how many you can put past the opposition.



PLAYABLE DEMO THREE

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Publisher: **Konami** Game type: **Football simulation** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2 (Full game 1-8)**

Controls

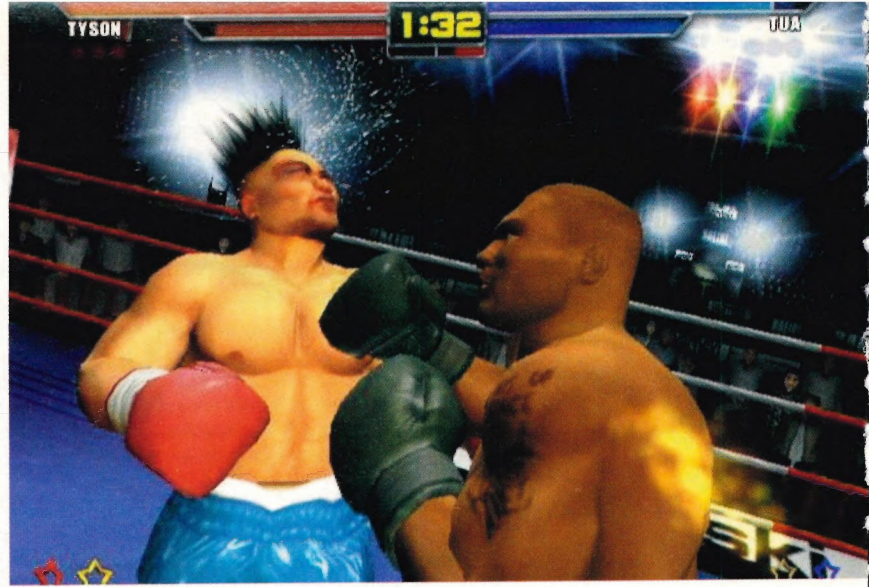
- L-stick - Move
- ⓧ Pass/Foot-in tackle
- Ⓢ Shoot
- Ⓢ Long pass/Slide tackle
- Ⓢ Through ball
- Ⓢ Switch player
- Ⓢ Sprint
- Ⓢ Pause/Options

Like football? Course you do. And if you haven't played it already, you're going to love *Pro Evolution Soccer*. The first PS2 release in Konami's *ISS Pro Evolution* series – which has been topping the PSone footy table for years – this is the best football game we've ever played. So realistic you can almost feel the draught from a Keano sliding tackle, PES really is the 'beautiful game'.

The demo

Our fantastic two-player demo lets you play the first half of a match between a choice of five teams – England, Germany, Spain, France or Italy. Once the demo has loaded, press **Start** and select 'Match Mode' with **ⓧ**, then choose 'National Teams' and make your selection with **←**, **→** and **ⓧ**. Choose between the available strips, then set your difficulty level – you can obviously raise this as you get more confident – and pick a stadium with **↑**, **↓** and **ⓧ**. Set up your team as desired at the next screen, then go to 'Start Match' to get stuck in!





Controls

Basic controls:

- L-stick - Move
- R-stick - Block
- ⊗ Uppercut
- ⊙ Left hook
- ⊙ Right hook
- ⊙ Jab
- ⊙ Dodge right
- ⊙ Dodge left
- ⊙+⊙ Lean back
- ⊙+⊙ Elbow
- ⊙+⊙/⊙ Low blow
- ⊙ Taunt
- ⊙ Pause/Options

Tyson combos:

- ⊙+⊙,⊙+⊙,⊙
- Bronze combo
- ⊙+⊙,⊙+⊙,⊙
- Silver combo
- Tua combos:
- ⊙+⊙,⊙+⊙,⊙
- Bronze combo
- ⊙,⊙+⊙,⊙
- Silver combo

PLAYABLE DEMO FOUR

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Publisher: **Codemasters** Game type: **Boxing sim** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2**

With an appealing mixture of arcade and simulation thrills, Tyson's PS2 debut includes title fights, speed boxing and multiple Two-player modes. In addition to the various punches, there are combos unique to each of the 16 pro heavyweights, plus illegal moves like an elbow to the face for those wanting to indulge in a little blatant cheating.

The demo

Once loaded, select a one- or two-player game with ↓/↑ and ⊗. This demo features a bruising bout between Tyson and David Tua. To power-up punches for maximum effect, hold down the relevant button until your gloves go red. Using the illegal moves can also be useful, but be careful as if they're seen by the referee, it'll result in points being deducted. Get caught too often and you'll find yourself disqualified.



Controls

- D-pad/Analogue - Movement
- ⊙ Grapple
- ⊙ Attack
- ⊙ Run
- ⊙ Guard
- ⊙ Smackdown move
- ⊙ Taunt
- ⊙ Pause

PLAYABLE DEMO FIVE

WWF SMACKDOWN! "JUST BRING IT!"

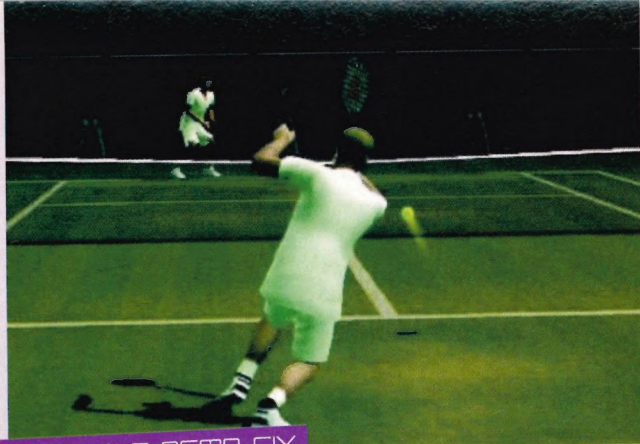
Publisher: **THQ** Game type: **Wrestle-em-up** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2**

THQ's smash-hit WWF franchise is one of the most popular game franchises ever and this debut PS2 incarnation is easily the best *SmackDown* outing yet, looking all the better for the extra power afforded by Sony's black box. The Rock, Kane, 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin and co are all back to grapple in 70 (!) different gameplay modes and new features including Six-man Tag, Royal Rumble and Nine Men In The Ring, along with all the old favourite options, like King Of The Ring, Hardcore and Survival.

The demo

After the demo has loaded, choose Exhibition with ↑, ↓ and ⊗, then select Single or Tag for one or two players. Choose your choice of wrestlers from Steve Austin, The Undertaker, Kane, Triple H and Kurt Angle with ↑, ↓ and ⊗ again, then it's time to layeth that smacketh down! Apart from one-on-one and two-on-two, our exclusive demo lets you wrestle in the crowd and, for the first time, features each of the superstars' unique entrances on massive screens.





PLAYABLE DEMO SIX

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT

Publisher: **SCEE** Game type: **Tennis sim** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2 (Full game 1-4)**

Dropping the Anna Kournikova moniker (but not the Russian lovely herself from the roster, thank goodness), Namco's latest smash effortlessly plays the current PS2 tennis opposition off court. It's great in single-player and life-sappingly addictive with a MultiTap plugged in and up to three other players. Even if grass, racquets and strawberries aren't your thing, the sublime control system will allow the most uncoordinated tennis newbie to pull off lobs, drop shots, slices and smashes like Pistol Pete himself.

Controls

L-stick - Move
 ⓧ Serve/Return (Hold for extra power)
 Ⓞ Lob

The demo

While our demo locks out after five minutes of play, there's still plenty of time to hone your Tennis skills. Once loaded, choose 50 or 60Hz mode (depending on what your TV can handle) with ←/→ and ⓧ, then press ▶ to begin. For a two-player game, player 2 should press ▶ at this point. Use ←/→ and ⓧ to select singles, doubles and co-op or versus, then choose either Hingis or Sampras to begin the showdown in the final at Wimbledon.

PLAYABLE DEMO EIGHT



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

Publisher: **EA Sports** Game type: **Golf simulation** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2**

Controls

L-stick/R-stick - Swing club/Spin direction
 D-pad - Move aiming marker
 ⓧ Raise camera view
 Ⓞ Change shot type/Replay shot
 Ⓞ Zoom to target/Mulligan
 Ⓞ Reset targeting
 Ⓞ/Ⓞ Switch clubs
 Ⓞ Power boost
 Ⓞ Spin control

He's well on the way to becoming the greatest golfer of all time despite only being 26 years old and EA's latest Tiger Woods endorsed golfing title is in keeping with his winning ways. PGA Tour 2002 utilises the fluid movement of the Analog sticks to simulate the swing, providing a fresh approach and bringing greater realism to the genre. The courses are also brilliantly recreated.

The demo

Select one-player from the menu screen with ↑/↓ and ⓧ to play three holes starting with the 18th hole at Pebble Beach, the 16th at Sawgrass and finishing off with the 2nd at Black Rock Cove. Or select two-player for a taste of the speed golf options that involves both players driving from the tee at the same time, then racing to reach the ball for the next shot. Obviously, first player to get their ball in the hole wins.

ON THE DVD

PLAYABLE DEMO SEVEN

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Publisher: **SCEE** Game type: **Racer** Out: **Now** Players: **1 (Full game 1-2)**

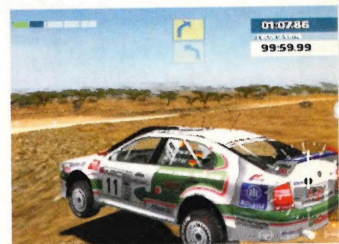
Evolution Studios' first venture into PS2 gaming is giving Codemasters and Mr McRae a run for their money. Set in 14 worldwide locations (including Monte Carlo, New Zealand and Britain) WRC features all the gritty realism of the event itself in terms of handling, sound and graphics while retaining the crucial playability of a great gaming experience.

Controls

L-stick - Steer
 ⓧ Accelerate
 Ⓞ Brake
 Ⓞ Handbrake
 Ⓞ Change view
 Ⓞ Pause/Options

The demo

After watching the intro movie press ⓧ to choose Time Trial. Another introductory sequence then appears and you can skip this with ⓧ. Use ↑, ↓ and ⓧ to choose either the snowy St. Pierre-Entrevaux stage at Monaco or El Condor in Argentina and ⓧ again to hit the track. Get the best possible times and go for the in-car view if you dare!



PLAYABLE DEMO NINE

FORMULA ONE 2001

Publisher: **SCEE** Game type: **F1 simulation** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2 (Full game 1-16)**

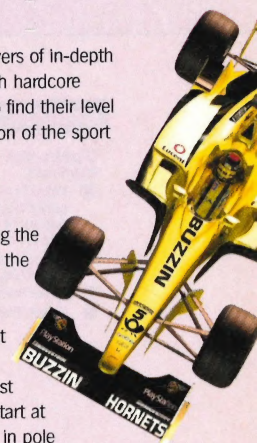
Controls

L-stick - Steering
 ⓧ Accelerate
 Ⓞ Brake
 Ⓞ Change View
 Ⓞ Gear Down (Manual/ Select Reverse (While stationary))
 Ⓞ Gear Up (Manual)

With its finely tuned, intuitive racing and layers of in-depth options Formula One 2001 allows for both hardcore petrolheads and Sunday Schumachers to find their level of game. This is undoubtedly most faithful recreation of the sport yet seen on PS2.

The demo

Our demo gives you the challenging task of beating the world's finest drivers to the chequered flag around the infamous chicanes and hairpin bends of the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium. Once you've selected the demo, choose 'Quick Race' and select your team and driver from the official 2001 season line-up. After picking a driver you can adjust your difficulty setting before the race begins. You start at the back of the grid but if you're good you can be in pole position by the end of the first lap.





PLAYABLE DEMO TEN

RUGBY

Publisher: **EA Sports** Game type: **Rugby sim** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2 (Full game 1-4)**

Controls

OPEN PLAY

- D-pad - Run
- ⬅/➡ Pass left/right (with ball)
- ⊗ Punt/Drop kick (with ball)
- Ⓢ Up and under (with ball)
- Ⓢ Grubber kick (with ball)
- Ⓢ Soccer kick (loose ball)
- ⊗ Tackle
- Tap ⊗ Contest tackle
- Ⓢ Change player (without ball)
- Ⓢ Hand-off (with ball)
- Hold ⊗ Sprint
- Ⓢ Defensive touch-down
- Any button Try
- SET PLAY KICKS**
- ⊗ Kick
- D-pad Elevation increase/decrease
- SET PLAY KICKS AT GOAL**
- ⊗ Kick at goal
- D-pad - Elevation increase/decrease

- D-pad - Rotate left/right
- ⬅/➡ Velocity increase/decrease
- ⬅/➡ Curl kick left/right

TAP KICKS

- ⊗ Tap, pick up and run forward
- ⬅/➡ Tap, pick up and pass left/right

PACK PLAY

- D-pad ↑/↓ Pack push/dig
- D-pad ←/→ Wheel left/right (scrums)
- ⊗ Put-in (scrums)
- Ⓢ Rake (scrums)
- ⬅/➡ Pick up and pass left/right
- ⬅/➡ Pick up and run left/right
- Ⓢ Pass back (scrums/rucks/mauls)
- Ⓢ Bind (rucks/mauls)

LINE-OUTS

- Any button - Throw
- ⊗ Catch
- Ⓢ Tap-out

Touched by EA's stylish makeover brush Rugby's approach is more Madden than FIFA with action flowing at an impressive lick without sacrificing the stats and tactics that are a hallmark of the EA Sports stable. Get cracking with Quick Start and a clutch of basic controls or take your time to learn the 33 possible player moves over the Six Nations or World Cup championships. What unifies both types of play is the stylish presentation and some gorgeously realised stadium showdowns.

The demo

Choose Rugby from the DVD menu screen and then confirm Quick Start. You'll then be shown a full listing of the controls (which are reproduced on the left.) Then choose either to play a One-player or Two-player game from the teams available - Australia or the unstoppable England. If you proceed without choosing at least one team, the demo will run a spectator-friendly match. After you've picked your side, press ⊗ and the match will begin. You can pause the game at any time to check player statistics, change the camera angle or replay a glory moment, but after approximately five minutes the demo will reset. Of course, you can reload as many times as you want.

PLAYABLE DEMO ELEVEN

NHL 2001

Publisher: **EA** Game type: **Ice hockey sim** Out: **Now** Players: **1-2**

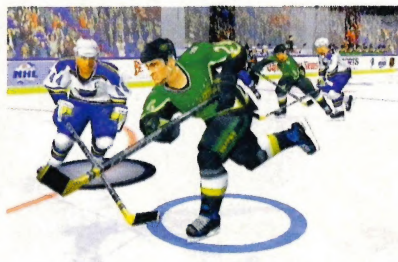
Controls

- D-pad/L-stick - Movement
- ⊗ Pass/Change player/Punch opponent (during one on one scrap)
- Ⓢ Deke (Decoy move)/Big hit
- Ⓢ Rush/Body check
- Ⓢ Shoot/Poke check

With the possible exception of boxing, no activity fuses the arenas of sport and wanton aggression with as much synergy as professional ice hockey. NHL 2001 plays up to this allowing some very cranky challenges and even the occasional fist fight to punctuate its supremely well-judged gameplay. From the individual player's changing expressions to the puck-cam goal replay, the graphics are every bit as good as the match action.

The demo

This demo gives you a good six minutes of ice-bound stick rattling between the visiting Dallas Stars and the New Jersey Devils. Play as either team against the PS2 or a mate, pausing at any point to use the interactive camera system to replay that opposition shaming moment with swooping scrutiny.



ON THE DVD

Talk to us!

If you have problems with your DVD, pop it in an envelope and send it to the following address. We'll test it and, if faulty, send you out a new one. Write to us at **Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, Disc Returns, Customer Services, Future Publishing, Cary Court, Bancombe Road Industrial Estate, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6TB.**

*Remember, this DVD will only work on a PS2.

video previews

An enticing glimpse of even more PS2 sports stars...



VIDEO ONE SSX TRICKY

Publisher: EA

Join us for a high-speed jaunt down the gnarly slopes of Tokyo Megaplex and Alysium Alps in our edit of EA's amazing SSX remake. Turn to page 44 for the full review.



VIDEO TWO THIS IS FOOTBALL 2002

Publisher: SCEE

A veritable goal fest in our video of This is Football 2002, easily the best version yet of Team SoHo's FIFA challenger. Check out our review on page 19.



VIDEO THREE LMA MANAGER 2002

Publisher: Codemasters

Hugely popular on PSone, Codies' LMA series is now keeping us awake on PS2. This is a stat-freak's wet dream, with 28 countries, 722 clubs and 17,000 players to tinker with. Reviewed on page 20.



VIDEO FIVE TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Publisher: Activision

It almost goes without saying that the Hawkster's debut PS2 grind is the best skating game yet seen. Better visuals, better levels, better control - actually, better everything. Check out this video then have a look at our review, page 48.



VIDEO FOUR V-RALLY 3

Publisher: Infogrames

Having had its limelight stolen by WRC, V-Rally 3 is aiming to redress the balance with some of the most realistic rallying yet. Enjoy this first-look trailer then read the preview on page 108.



VIDEO SIX PREMIER MANAGER 2002

Publisher: Infogrames

The long-running management game arrives on PS2, wearing its sheepskin coat and bellowing instructions from the touchline. Stat-heavy, detailed and with decent match animation, read all about it in our preview on page 98.

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FOOTBALL GAMES

Check out our reviews of the best footy action on PS2.

P 12 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

The greatest footy game ever naturally captains our football sim first XI. Well, first VIII to be precise.

P 15 ISS 2

Pro Evolution's less realistic, more arcade-style sister title.

P 16 2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

The good-looking luxury signing with all the right players and teams but a limited understanding of the game.

P 18 UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Decent footy, more UEFA Cup than Champions League.

P 19 THIS IS FOOTBALL 2002

The so-so PSone series goes up a league.

P 20 LMA MANAGER 2002

Engrossing management sim with more depth than Real Madrid's overdraft facility.

P 22 SIR ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2001

*You make f**king average management games!

P 23 REDCARD

Fun kickabout where fouls and dives take centre stage.

P 24 TALKING BALLS

We ask five footy sim developers what makes a beautiful game? After several drinks, they tell us!

WITH EXPERT ANALYSIS BY...

Illustration: @matthiashoo.com 2002



Rodney Cauton
He's petty, he's anal, he absolutely will not accept any nonsense.

Alex McManager
Angry old skool Scottish guv'nor with a vocab of expletives.





With close-range free kicks, use the short pass to find a (strangely) unmarked team-mate. It's paramount to cheating but, hey, it guarantees a goal.



The high-profile players, especially, look extremely realistic.



"The finest game of football I have ever refereed. Deep, yet intuitive. Exciting, yet tactical. But as for the commentators: James, Butcher, you two are a disgrace. Don't give me 'wind shooting through the stadium', you're off!"

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Not only has football come home, but it's put its feet up, grabbed a couple of tinnies and is happily playing itself on PS2. Chant yourselves silly for the Best Football Game Ever™.

Publisher: **Konami** Developer: **KCE (Tokyo)** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-8** Out: **Now**

There's a simple reason why football is the greatest, most popular sport on the planet and that's the game's pure, joyful simplicity. Yes, you can confuse matters with the offside rule and so on, but at its heart this is a game involving nothing more complicated than the placement of a ball in an opponent's goal while defending your own. KCET, the developer of *Pro Evolution Soccer*, obviously understands this simplicity and that's why the team has created the best football game ever made.

PES captures the feel of football almost perfectly. As every under-achieving midfield stroller will tell you, pace is vitally important and where other footy games either amble along at a boring rate or go so damn quickly it's impossible to play a measured game, like that baby bear's porridge, *Pro Evolution Soccer* gets it just right with matches unfolding at an expertly-balanced pace.

Equally, the number of available moves lends itself to an intuitive game of footy. With short pass, long pass, through ball and shoot, you have all the ammunition you need to build a tactical, adaptable approach to the game. You don't need an arsenal (no pun intended) of special moves – if an overhead kick is required your player will perform it providing he's in the right place at the right time. You simply press shoot and get the angle just right. This is a game about skill rather than memorising numerous button combinations. And yet, beneath the basic set up

GO TO

Hardcore
Check out our comprehensive *Pro Evo* guide and become a world class footy player.

PAGE 118



Playing styles of both the teams and individual players are spot-on. Owen, for example, is lightning quick and deadly when through on goal.



It's much harder to score from free kicks than in the PSone versions – which just makes it all the sweeter when you curl one into the top corner.

there are more complicated skills available. You can one-two, shimmy, chip, step-over, dummy – just about every move that's possible in real football is possible here. The learning curve is as sweet as a Beckham cross and those who put the practise in will soon be dribbling, dummyming, lobbing the keeper and generally larging it over less-accomplished players, à la Maradona in the 1986 World Cup. The flow of the game is also superbly realistic. At first



// Pro Evolution Soccer hammers FIFA and every other football game into non-league obscurity//

you'll find it difficult to keep possession and get on the score sheet, but the trick is to approach it as you would an actual football match and forget all the usual moves that bring success in videogames. Here, as in real football, results have to be earned. Play a passing game, move into space, sprint only when a gap appears and always stay patient and you'll soon find yourself in goal-scoring positions. Just as impressive is the way that individual players perform with total authenticity: Roberto Carlos and his long-range free kicks; the blistering pace of Owen; Keane's never-say-die aggression; the skill of Rivaldo, the shooting power of Batistuta. Konami really knows its stuff.

Of course, this brilliance has always been evident in the ISS series and yet the games have continually been outsold by EA's inferior FIFA franchise. This can be partly attributed to EA's constant TV and print advertising. But the main reason behind FIFA's success is its trappings – the real strips/teams/player names that the FIFA licence brings.

Unfortunately, PES loses out once again in this crucial presentation department. Where FIFA offers just about every



As in real football, the ref's reaction is never predictable.



In the main, goalies are extremely consistent and reliable.

major league in the world, PES has just 32 club teams and while most of the big boys are there – Milan, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Barcelona and seven Premiership sides including Man U, Leeds and Arsenal – anyone who supports a team that isn't available will be more than a little disappointed.

And even though the series has an official FIFPro licence for the first time, this only applies to 29 nations and means all the South American countries and a few European ones are lumbered with jumbled up player names – Batistuta becomes Butatista, Giggs is now Gregs and Roberto Carlos is Roberto Larcos. Admittedly, it's a minor fault – and the names can be edited if you really want to go to all that trouble – but in a game that oozes realism in every other department this lack of authenticity is bound to annoy a few football-mad punters.

Gameplay-wise, there are very few complaints. The first touch can sometimes be erratic with perfectly weighted passes bouncing off the receiver's leg. And that old problem about players having to complete their animation cycles can occasionally see defenders unavoidably running the ball into their own net, or wingers taking the ball a step too far, leading to a goal kick rather than a cross.

But these minor problems can't disguise the fact that Pro Evolution Soccer hammers the FIFA series and every other football game into non-league obscurity. We could go on and on about how authentic it is but until you actually get your hands on the game you won't believe quite how much Pro Evolution Soccer looks, plays and feels like real football. If you love football – and if you don't, why the hell not? – then to paraphrase Mr Keegan, you'll love it, love it, when you play Pro Evolution Soccer. ■ Lee Hart

THE EVOLUTION OF PRO SOCCER



1. The Sequel

Now available in Japan, Winning Eleven 6 – Winning Eleven is the Japanese name for the series, Pro Evolution Soccer is based on Winning Eleven 5 – is even better than the masterful PES. We've played it and are delighted to report that it boasts vastly improved animation, extra teams and even more responsive controls, as well as ironing out the flaws in the previous game. What's more, we can expect some extra enhancements to be made to the title before it's released in the UK in November as Pro Evolution Soccer 2. The world's greatest football game made even greater? Oh yes, the countdown starts here...

2. The Management Game

We asked Pro Evo's Producer Shingo Takatsuka (pictured below) if he would ever consider doing a football management game as a spin-off from the series. This is his reply: "We feel the needs of bringing a football management game as we hear the voices of our soccer game fans. We're not sure when we can officially announce the brand new game, but please do look forward to it in the near future."

Of course, there are absolutely no details on this prospective game and we don't even know if KCET has actually started work on it. But the mere fact that Shingo and his team intend to make a Pro Evolution Soccer management game is pant-wettingly exciting news. We simply cannot wait to find out more info – and as soon as we do, you'll be the first to know.



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Why we'd buy it:
- Astonishingly realistic
- It's the best football game ever made

Why we'd leave it:
- Terrible commentary
- Occasional control frustrations

09

PlayStation 2 NERDICT

With the 'keeper flailing, Rio powers the header home and puts England into the final.



ISS 2



"ISS 2 is what I'd term a luxury player, aye. It's canny on the fancy shots and that, but it doesne take the game serious, it's no into the nitty-gritty. A wee bit like ma pal, Veron... Och! The press have posioned ma f*****g heed!"

Konami's other football game offers arcade-style knockabout action as an alternative to *Pro Evolution Soccer's* real deal.

Publisher: **Konami** Developer: **KCE OSA** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

Judging by our constant drooling over *Pro Evolution Soccer* you may wonder just why you should play any other football videogame. Well, if you like your pixellated footy on the cheesy side, *ISS 2* will be right down your flank. While *Pro Evo* is the ultimate simulation, its sister title is an arcade-style player with enough flashes of pick-up-and-play brilliance to please everyone.

For starters, the collision animations are superb, with each challenge exacting an appropriate response from your victim. Sweep your legs wildly at their trailing peg and you'll send your opponent careering skyward. If you win the ball, the defence-splitting one-tuos will have you grinning

immodestly, too. Another highlight is the commentary. Instead of a string of inane rantings, Jon Champion and moustachioed BBC expert Mark Lawrenson supply the chatter, gabbing appropriately and, more often than not, actually making sense. Additionally, plenty of effort has gone into generating realistic models of stars such as Davids, Kluivert, Seaman and Beckham. All good stuff.

On the down side, some major niggles mean you never feel fully in control of your players. When the ball is destined for your opponent, or a team-mate, it's nigh-on impossible to make an interception. Player swapping can be nightmarish too: tap **U** to take control of a man ahead of the ball and the delay is so great you'll press **U** again toggling through your intended defender to another player. Very annoying. Almost as worrying are the ball physics. Developer KCE OSA has largely ignored the effect of the ball's pace and a player's body position on the power of their subsequent pass. As a result, each connection is as solid as if it were made under no pressure.

That said, this is a different type of football game. Elements of cheeky action, such as the over-the-top shooting animation and the goalkeeper's repertoire of parries are typical of the arcade feel. A sense of intensity is maintained by a strong imperative to attack, as pacey play complements easy passing. Sadly, most scoring chances are generated by crossing from the by-line or by lashing the ball at the keeper who inevitably spills it to your on-rushing attacker.

That's not to say the game lacks depth altogether, though. Defending is particularly satisfying as you welly the ball away like a pro. In-game management allows you to choose your route of attack, Chelsea's match announcer parps out the scorer's number and away goals are greeted with the raucous approval of your small following and the jeers of the home crowd.

//Elements of cheeky action, such as the over-the-top shooting, are typical of the game's arcade feel//



Don't stand there! Make the wall jump and block the shot.



Player models are generally accurate, but this doesn't look much like the boy Neville, does it?

BECKS MACHINE

He may star in his own videogame, but David shows off his set-piece skills a treat in *ISS 2*.



Corner
Beckham lines up a corner as you adjust the height, power and swerve of his cross.



Free Kick
With the same control over the free kicks, here's your chance to re-live that glorious moment against Greece.



Pose
Diamond earring glinting in the sunlight and Posh simpering in the crowd, let's just hope our hero is fit for the World Cup.

Overall, *ISS 2* succeeds in occasionally out-classing most footy offerings. However, *Pro Evolution Soccer* also allows you to play suicidal football and lets you change the pace and spray the ball around with astonishing realism if you prefer. Our advice: buy *PES*. If you've already got it, be warned, *ISS 2* is a decent diversion but its basic gameplay means you'll soon be back playing the undisputed football champion. ■ **Lee Hall**

ISS 2

Why we'd buy it:
- Satisfying fouls
- A decent arcade alternative to *PES*

Why we'd leave it:
- The ball physics can prove frustrating
- Not much depth

07

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



Star man Owen drives forward for England's equaliser.

Owen

"EA Sports is guilty of a cynical challenge with this World Cup rush job. It looks good and the stats are up to date, but gameplay hasn't moved on from the previous release. Your card's marked FIFA, do it again and you're off!"

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP



It's the official game of this summer's festival of football. Experience the glory! Marvel at the skills! Suffer the same old flaws...

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Canada Price: £39.99
Players: 1-8 Out: Now

Pro Evolution Soccer, in our opinion, is the best football game you can play, simple as that. No more lectures, we promise. Now vying for the second spot with the likes of ISS 2 and UEFA Champions League is 2002 FIFA World Cup, the perennial reiteration of EA Sports' long-running, high-gloss footy sim. The company's primary tactic, as with its other big name tie-ins, is to present these games so impeccably that they appear to be the definitive article even if the gameplay is lacking. TV-style commentary, lovingly recreated stadia, and perfectly-timed releases mean FIFA games always make hods of cash.

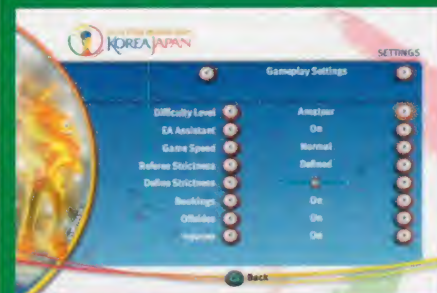
This time EA has excelled itself with its attention to detail. The World Cup schedule is accurate to the second and allows you to go for



Another loving replay showcases the superb motion capturing.

IT'S A SET UP

There's more to 2002 FIFA World Cup than meets the eye. Get the most out of the game with our quick and easy guide to the playing options.



1. Skip To Amateur

There's no point starting in the insultingly easy Beginner mode. Whack the setting up to Amateur to face a bit more of a challenge.



2. Switch On Radar

This allows you to see more of the pitch and play longer balls with confidence. Without the radar, your awareness of your fellow pros will be limited.



3. Camera Height

Stick to the default camera, which is Tele Cam, but adjust the height to its maximum setting - the normal option can make players at the far side of the pitch seem a little squashed.

glory with any of the qualified teams, plus those of a few other sporting nations who didn't make it (such as Scotland). Players now bark linguistically accurate instructions at each other to match the team-specific crowd chants. The player models are often unnervingly accurate and represent the best use of the FIFA licence yet. EA's Emile Heskey, however, remains particularly scary.

The most impressive and rewarding technical achievement of the game is the outstanding player animation. Rival players now interact extremely realistically, and not just by shoving and leaning into one another. When it comes to tackling, or more precisely fouling, the animations come into their own. Clip your opponent's trailing leg and it will click against their other foot as they stumble. Even better, World Cup's players slide to hook the ball from the line and then stand up ready for action. That's at least something it's got over Pro Evolution Soccer.

But despite these positive touches, the game just doesn't feel quite right. Floaty physics, stilted gameplay and the need to repeatedly tap A to sprint combine to make World Cup pretty hard work. Defending can also be somewhat clumsy with constant sliding tackles often proving the most effective method. Why make us defend like David Batty when we want to recreate the effortless positional play of players such as Laurent Blanc?

It is, it seems, EA Sports' very focus on ensuring no

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

Here are the playable nations – and their stars – who didn't make it to the real World Cup finals. Pick 'em and you can still make a fantasy charge for the world's greatest sporting trophy.



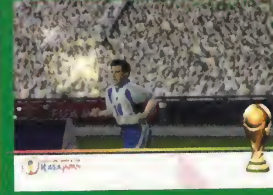
Austria
FIFA Ranking: 39
Star Player: Andrea Herzog, Striker



Australia
FIFA Ranking: 35
Star Player: Harry Kewell, Left Forward



Czech Republic
FIFA Ranking: 12
Star Player: Pavel Nedved, Central Midfielder



Finland
FIFA Ranking: 34
Star Player: Jari Litmanen, Forward



Greece
FIFA Ranking: 40
Star Player: Nikos Machlas, Striker



Israel
FIFA Ranking: 36
Star Player: None



Norway
FIFA Ranking: 22
Star Player: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Striker

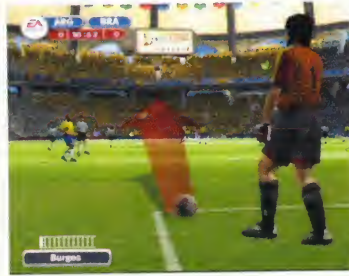
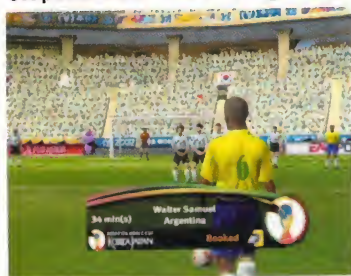


Scotland
FIFA Ranking: 37
Star Player: Barry Ferguson, Left winger



Switzerland
FIFA Ranking: 41
Star Player: Kubily Turckilmaz, Left Forward

Set-pieces follow the standard 'great big red arrow for power and direction' formula.



Christian Vieri fires a rocket past Ecuador's keeper.



All the actual World Cup stadia are realistic down to the finest detail.

frame of animation is missing, that no overhead kick is ever misjudged, which ruins the gaming experience. Skewed efforts on goal and fluked rebounds hammering the post provide moments of excitement that recreate the thrill of live football in other games. Sadly, they're non-existent here. By forcing the player to try the spectacular on every occasion *World Cup* creates an artificial world and removes player choice. After all, cheeky toe-poked finishes can humble opponents more than any diving header.



//Forcing the player to try the spectacular on every occasion creates an artificial world//

QUICK SUBSTITUTION

This game wouldn't be *FIFA* without a layer of minor changes, but a few new buzz phrases don't signify a gaming revolution. In *World Cup*, individual 'star players' are faster and more powerful than others. David Beckham and Zinedine Zidane, for instance, can glide past their contemporaries with relative ease. Sadly, even they can't escape the slowdown in frame rate that plagues the midfield action when the game gets tight. However, 'air play'

allows you to meet the ball in the air more realistically and even perform keepy-ups to humble your mates.

The last major introduction to the series for *FIFA 2002* was a new passing method, which required you to weight your pass. This remains, so now the longer you hold down the pass button, the further the ball travels. Moreover, the runs of your team-mates are plotted on screen so you can angle through-balls and exploit space or even prompt a winger to run wide and create a crossing opportunity. All of which is great in theory, but the passes have to be so deliberate that you'll soon revert to your normal dribbling and long ball game. As your player receives the ball and

painstakingly controls it before passing, any human opponent will already be snapping at your heels, and even the computer is quick to stick the boot in.

To be fair, EA's cumulative approach to its sports franchises doesn't always simply reinforce bad habits. Take, for instance, the exemplary commentary. Star pundit Andy Gray and commentating legend John Motson have traditionally added a classy TV-style gloss to proceedings. Sadly their new banter – forced and wooden – is simply nauseating. The worst of it is Andy Gray's sycophantic

rambling about every host city's "fabulous attractions" and how every World Cup moment is a special moment.

The over-egging of the *World Cup* pudding doesn't end there. In place of the licensed soundtracks from artists such as Blur and Robbie Williams comes dramatic classical music from the Hollywood school. Substitutions and goal replays are greeted with gladiatorial brass flourishes. Even a simple tap-in is presented as the greatest goal of all time, an OTT celebration designed to bring a tear to your eye. And it probably will when you realise you've shelled out £40 for practically the same game you bought last year.

Overall, *2002 FIFA World Cup* is a decent impersonation of football that will keep you entertained for a few days prior to the tournament. Chances are you'll revisit it after England's glory or agony later this summer, too. But with only cosmetic improvement over *FIFA 2002*, this revamp simply isn't worth your money. ■ Lee Hall

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

Why we'd buy it:
- Authentic World Cup stylings
- Traditional FIFA gameplay

Why we'd leave it:
- Practically the same as the last FIFA
- Too much like hard work

06

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEASON 2001/2002

The giants of European football do battle in world soccer's most prestigious club tournament.

Publisher: **Take 2** Developer: **Silicon Dreams** Price: £39.99
 Players: 1-8 Out: **Now**

With its prestigious UEFA Champions League licence you might think this game merely centres on the 32 entrants from the 2001/2002 season. However, you can also play with past champions (of which there are 46 different teams) or create your own side from scratch to rub shoulders with Europe's finest. So although you won't find the likes of Derby or Charlton in here, there's a glorious roster of teams ranging from the Real Madrid of Puskas and Di Stefano, to Man Utd's all-conquering 1999 team.



//Copious amounts of aftertouch results in spectacular shots that bend, dip and swerve into the net//

What instantly impresses here is the attention to detail, particularly the authentic kit designs complete with sponsor logos that give the game an authoritative appearance. Sadly though, the player models themselves don't look much like the real things and they aren't too dissimilar in terms of

individual ability – instantly putting the game on the retreat from *Pro Evolution Soccer's* attacking ensemble of uniquely-rated stars, no two of which play the same.

What makes this especially unfortunate is that Silicon Dreams has developed the makings of a fabulous PS2 football engine, which would have made for a compelling buy had it not been marred by some schoolboy errors. For example, you have complete freedom to weight your passes using an effective power bar system, stringing together exciting plays and organising attacks, but if you want to take a snap shot when an unforeseen shooting opportunity presents itself then these power bars prove too restrictive.

Likewise, the animation, for the most part, is brilliant – you can even bring the ball down dead on your foot – but too often your player will be in the midst of some lavish bicycle kick animation while the opposition runs off with the ball. The AI of the players can also be dodgy with 'keepers staying rooted to their line when the ball is only yards away from them, and strikers sometimes square the ball to a team-mate when through one-on-one with the goalie – and we all know that just wouldn't happen.

DON'T STOP MOVING

Silicon Dreams proves that you can have a glittering licence and still make a quality football game.

Too often, developers take having a big licence attached to a footy title as an invitation to scrimp on some of the finer aspects of our beautiful game. So it's refreshing to see that as well as having all the fancy presentation, *UEFA* also boasts some of the finest animation we've seen in a football game.



1. He bears down on goal, tentatively tapping the ball in front of him with the outstep of his foot.



2. He dips the head, raises his arms to counter balance his shift in weight and lets rip.



3. As the ball slams home, the player is still in the air as his whole body contorts to counteract the immense force he has just applied to the ball.



4. The only downside is that the players stop dead when the ball is in the net until the preprogrammed goal celebration is spooled off the disc. Still room for improvement there, then.

Despite these downers, playing *UEFA Champions League* is an enjoyable experience. Silicon Dreams' penchant for including copious amounts of aftertouch results in spectacular shots that bend, dip, swerve and all but swagger into the net, meaning you'll never score the same goal twice. But a team challenging for honours needs to perform consistently well and not just turn on the style at certain junctures. With that in mind, *Pro Evolution Soccer* marches boldly on unrivalled. ■ **Ryan Butt**

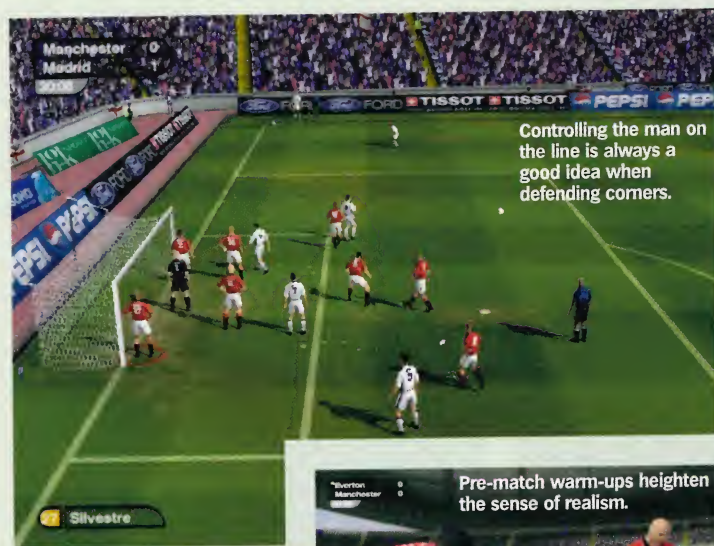
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2001/2002

Why we'd buy it:
 - Plays a good game of footy
 - Decent commentary from TV's Guy Mowbray

Why we'd leave it:
 - Not as free-flowing as it should be
 - The player AI is suspect



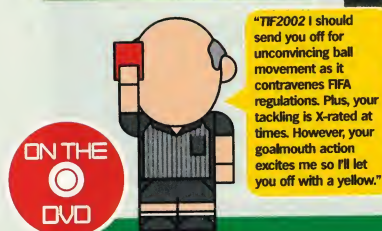
PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



Controlling the man on the line is always a good idea when defending corners.



Pre-match warm-ups heighten the sense of realism.



"TIF2002 I should send you off for unconvincing ball movement as it contravenes FIFA regulations. Plus, your tackling is X-rated at times. However, your goalmouth action excites me so I'll let you off with a yellow."

IF IT'S IN THE GAME...

This Is Football 2002 offers a unique and exhaustive range of options, with more special touches than a Diego Maradona's Greatest Hits video.



Customisation options are extensive, allowing changes to kit design, formation and tactics.



The team rosters are totally accurate from the start of the 2001/2002 season, so you'll see all the new arrivals like Van Nistelrooy and Veron.



It's possible to perform deliberate two-footed tackles or dives, provided the ref isn't looking...



The Jumpers for Goalposts mode lets you relive those playground glories, complete with school PE kits!

THIS IS FOOTBALL 2002

SCEE's imaginatively-titled footy franchise gets a much needed overhaul for its PS2 debut.

Publisher: **SCEE** Developer: **Team SoHo** Price: **£19.99**
Players: **1-8** Out: **Now**

So this is football? All of it? Every trick, tantrum and through-ball; each playground dream, vicious foul and last-minute winner? No, not quite, though Team SoHo has made an admirable attempt to distil the beautiful game's emotional highs. Rarely has the atmosphere – or diversity – of real football been so ably committed to silicon. Forget the sins of its PSone predecessor because this is an engaging, if slightly flawed, kickabout.

Match days are wonderfully evoked. Clearly identifiable, FIFPro licenced players bound onto the pitch exchanging banter and stretching convincingly. Throughout the game, the crowd chant and holler in accordance with the action, and despite their paper-chain appearance, the fans display greater emotion than in any football title to date – like holding their head in their hands as shots flash wide. On the pitch, players surround the referee after a foul, strikers clap to acknowledge a cross and muddy patches spread convincingly across a wet goalmouth. The nuances weave a captivating illusion of reality.



Players are accurately modelled, as demonstrated in the ace replays.

The passing game is tight, with some neat lobbed one-twos and delicate withheld through-balls. Defences won't succumb to repetitive tactics, so you'll have to wait for the darting runs of your team-mates. Sadly, though, the finer skills feel redundant: the shoulder buttons activate a variety of tricks, but it's almost impossible to beat a player one-on-one – even with Giggs or Di Canio.

Goals are invariably spectacular – a range of gratifying strikes, headers and overhead kicks – which, while imprecise, avoid the painful 'sweet spot' feel of the FIFA



//A two-player match becomes a tight-passing scrap with dramatic strikes and hilarious dives//

games. However, the ball's aerial movement is straight from EA's banana-curling lineage: crosses swerve magnetically towards players, while headers loop aimlessly in the crucial midfield area. And questionable collision detection makes close-range tackles risky, so sliding tackles are usually your clumsy first line of defence.



Swift flank attacks and whipped crosses are a primary source of goals, although headers still feel disappointingly automated.



Goalkeepers are reliable, but must be coaxed off their line.

Despite these shortcomings, games are eventful and varied. A two-player match becomes a tight-passing scrap punctuated with dramatic

strikes and hilarious dives. Every major world tournament is in there, including the World Cup and the English Premiership, with over 350 sides to choose from. And such is the concession to boyish fantasy that exhibition matches allow you to pit Burnley against Brazil, or test the Seventies Liverpool side against modern-day Real Madrid.

So this is arcade football, FIFA with richer options and improved passing, and a game worthy of any true fan's consideration as an alternative to Pro Evolution Soccer. Football has felt more skilful, but rarely so alive – and given this series' abysmal pedigree, that's as surprising a result as there's been all season. ■ **George Walter**

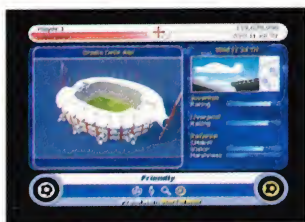
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2002

Why we'd buy it:
– Accurate teams and player likenesses
– Rewarding gameplay

Why we'd leave it:
– The learning curve isn't that steep.
– Ball movement looks odd

07

PlayStation 2 **NERDICT**



Liverpool take on the mighty Juventus in a friendly at the Stadio Della Alpi.



The transfer market - 17,000 players, 16 European divisions. Get searching.



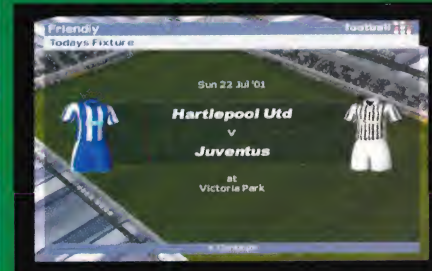
Sending your big defenders up for corners often pays dividends.



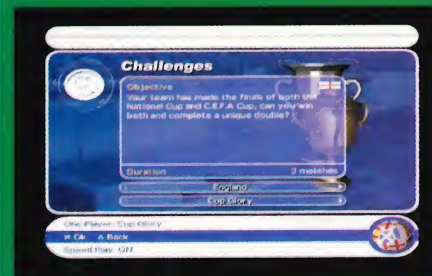
The 'all-out attack' tactic works a treat as classy defender Monsieur Blanc chips in with the opening goal.

EXTRA TIME

While it's the full management game that most people will be interested in, *LMA Manager 2002* also features a couple of diverting extras.



Codemasters has included a one-off friendly match option, where one or two players can pit teams against each other, setting tactics, altering the line-ups and bawling instructions from the dugout. If you've saved a team to a Memory Card, you can also load it in to play against a friend's line-up.



In addition to the main game mode, *LMA Manager 2002* also features a Challenge mode. Here you can take on one of eight club scenarios. Can you save your club from relegation with only five games to go? Or, at the other end of the footy scale, have you got what it takes to win back-to-back cup finals?



LMA MANAGER 2002

As Terry Venables once said about the management business: "if you can't stand the heat in the dressing room, get out of the kitchen..."

Publisher: Codemasters Developer: Codemasters
Price: £39.99 Players: 1-2 Out: Now

Football. The beautiful game. Small boys in the park. Jumpers for goalposts. A contest of strength and skill, of stamina and ability, a sport where, as Ron Atkinson once put it, "either side could win or it could be a draw." With the continued absence of *Championship Manager* on PS2 (it needs that hard drive) console owners must look to the alternatives. Who will win the 'Best Football Management Game on PS2' cup? The draw pits a resurgent *Premier Manager* against *Alex Ferguson's Player Manager* and *Sven Goran Eriksson's World Cup Manager* against the mighty *LMA Manager 2002*.

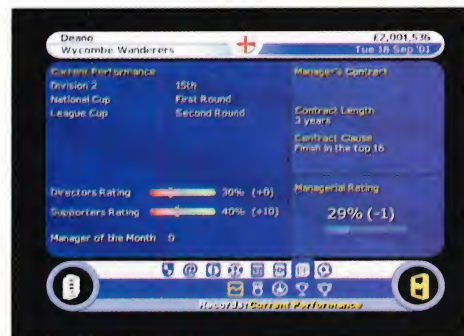
Unarguably the slickest and most playable game of its

kind on PSone, *LMA Manager 2002* stakes a strong claim for being the same on PS2. You can choose to take control of a club in one of 16 divisions in six European leagues: England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy or Spain. And once in the hot seat, you get to fine-tune your team's tactics, conduct training sessions and sift through a transfer market that features 722 clubs and 17,000 players from 28 different countries. *LMA Manager 2002* is vast. Whether you want to guide Stockport County into the playoffs or take Real Madrid to European Cup glory, this is a game that has months of gameplay in it.

What the LMA series has always done well is make the multiple menus, stats, facts and figures console-friendly - or at least as console-friendly as they can be. Initially, the screen layout can be confusing. There are eight main menu options (which you can scroll between using the **11**/**12**



You can either set your own training schedule or leave it to your assistant manager to do the coaching.



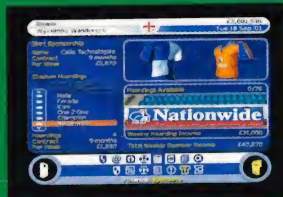
Keep an eye on how the board and the fans rate your performance and fulfill their expectations. Or else.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

In addition to the glamorous squad management and the 3D matches, *LMA Manager 2002* also gives you the opportunity to run every aspect of your chosen club.



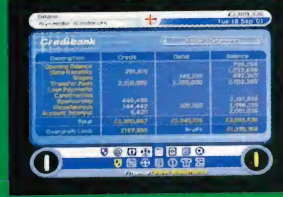
Youth Team: Each club in *LMA Manager 2002* operates a youth team policy. Your assistant manager will keep an eye on the lads here and inform you when any of them begin to show first team potential. When they do, snap them up.



Sponsors: A commercial manager can be hired to take care of getting shirt sponsorship and filling your ground's advertising hoardings. But unless he's a talented man, you may find it's better to do this yourself.



Stadium: To maximise revenues and increase capacity, you can improve and upgrade your stadium, adding more stand space, executive boxes or even relocating and constructing a brand new, 30,000-seater ground.



Finance: Life can be tough down in the lower divisions. Money is tight. Fortunately, bank loans are available to clubs allowing a significant cash injection for the purchase of a player or to invest in stadium improvements.



buttons), each of which has a layer of sub-menus (perused using **[Left]**/**[Right]**). Between them, you can control all areas of your chosen club, from the core squad management

tasks to hiring and firing staff, arranging sponsorship deals and expanding the stadium capacity. Cleverly, you can be as hands-on as you like. Can't be bothered to sort out the pitch advertising? Hire a commercial manager to do it for you. Don't have time to renegotiate player contracts? Let your assistant manager take care of it.

The key to success in *LMA Manager 2002* is having an understanding of how the different elements of the game affect each other. Players, for example, are rated in 13 different areas, from tackling and passing to temperament and stamina. They also have specialist skills, indicated by icons at the bottom of their lozenge-shaped attributes – penalty taker, free-kick specialist, etc. Morale also plays a factor and there are injuries to consider.

As for tactics, you can use one of several pre-set formations (such as the 1999 Man Utd attacking 4-3-1-2 formation, or the classic 4-4-2 adopted by the Liverpool side of the Seventies). Or you can create a custom shape, adjusting how high the defence sits up the field, how attack-minded the team is, whether they favour short passes or whether they hoof the ball hopefully up-field.

MATCH OF THE DAY

In contrast to the menus and the sub-menus, the stats, the reports and the tables, *LMA Manager 2002* also features a 3D match feature. And it's far from just a gimmick. As the match unfolds, you can make adjustments to your strategy by shouting preset commands at your players, or pause the game to dip back into the tactics menu. If you don't want to spend five minutes watching each match, the PS2 can generate a result based on the interaction of stats alone.



//You can control all areas of your club from squad management to expanding the stadium capacity//

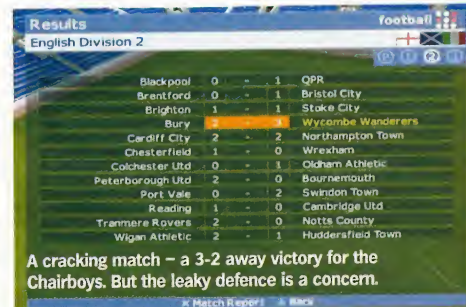


The bigger your ground, the greater your revenue.

While this is quicker, the disadvantage is that your assistant manager takes over, so you have no control over how the match plays out and no chance to personally make tactical changes or substitutions. Post match, there's also a highlights package (presented by Gary Lineker) where key match moments are replayed and analysed (by a typically acerbic Alan Hansen).

Even with all the many features that have been mentioned here, we're just scratching the surface of the game. For football fans, *LMA Manager 2002*'s gameplay will be simply irresistible. It's slow and involving, a giant sporting puzzle that requires a constantly changing combination of players and tactics to solve it.

The game isn't perfect, though. The power-bar method of measuring a player's abilities isn't as precise as a black-and-white stat, so it's often difficult to see whether one player is better than another. The 3D matches are time-consuming and obviously not up to FIFA standards – there



A cracking match – a 3-2 away victory for the Chairboys. But the leaky defence is a concern.



can be some wayward passing and kooky AI decisions. But, on the whole, watching the games is entertaining and a nice breather from the in-depth menus and their endless stat-crammed tables.

The best thing about *LMA Manager 2002* is that you just can't stop playing it. You can spend hours simply fiddling with the menus, tweaking this and adjusting that. It's bigger and better than its predecessor, with a huge array of options (such as Speed Play, where decisions must be made by 5pm) and the ability to affect the flow of a 3D match with pre-set commands (ie, all-out attack, play the long ball). Best of all, perhaps, there's no easy way to win and no one way to play. As John Motson once babbled, "in football, the unexpected is always likely to happen." ■ **Dean Evans**

LMA MANAGER 2002

Why we'd buy it
- A very slick, very playable management game
- Vast in scope

Why we'd leave it
- We haven't scouted all the opposition yet

08

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



Each player has loads of stats making transfers and team selection like maths.



Mind games, the 'hairdryer', inspired substitutions – follow the ways of Fergie and you might just take your team to the top of the Premiership.

Publisher: **3DO** Developer: **Anco** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1** Out: **Now**

Since the success of *Championship Manager* on PC, attempts to shoehorn a decent managerial title into a console have been of the quart/pint pot variety, often omitting key responsibilities. But Anco is confident that *Sir Alex Ferguson's Player Manager 2001* features the full gamut of managerial duties without compromise. As such, a full roster of Premiership, Nationwide and Conference sides are at your disposal, alongside a mixture of tactical know-how and the kind of transfer-wheeler dealing that would do Barry Fry proud.

This is football's version of *Jim'll Fix It*. It's the only way Barnsley will ever top the Premiership, a game where pretty much any outcome is possible and the miracles are effected via a simple menu system. On selecting your team, the first hour is spent recruiting coaches, establishing training sessions and scouring the transfer network. To this end, the Dual Shock 2 proves a useful ally. Anco has kept the menu system to a sensible level, using the shoulder

buttons to summon additional menus which act as short cuts to contracts, scouting reports and other necessary information you need to run a football club.

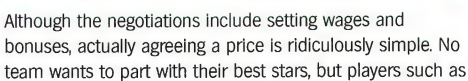
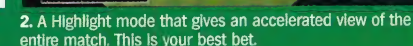
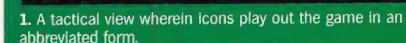
Whether it's with Luton or Leeds, success in *Player Manager* comes via predictable logic. With the available coaches marked out of ten, it is apparent that employing the highest rated will – yes – produce the best results. Therefore, although *Player Manager* does make organising tactics simple via one-touch controls, it comes at the price



of gameplay boiled down to a 'do well, make money, buy Beckham, do even better' format. This may be representative of the miracles Sir Alex has performed in the last ten years, but it isn't conducive to an enthralling simulation.

Transfer dealings are also disappointingly limited.

Match day is when all that planning and organisation comes to a head and the helplessness of watching your team put your orders into practice can be particularly tense. To this end, Anco has incorporated three views.



Kieron Dyer and Steven Gerrard can be bought by the likes of Bolton or Wimbledon simply by matching or even undercutting the meagre asking prices – negating

any need for tracking players or scouring for bargains.

This is a pity as a key part of managerial games is discovering an unknown player, and its loss merely reiterates *Player Manager's* simplistic nature. A few more unpredictable elements and giant-killing defeats wouldn't go amiss either, but with Sir Alex supposedly overseeing the game, maybe he's forgotten what it's like not to win the league at a canter. Nevertheless, it took him years of hard work to succeed, and making it seem so simple does him, his game and armchair managers a huge disservice.

■ **Steve Merrett**

SIR ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2002

Why we'd buy it:

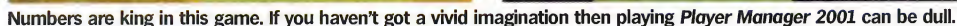
- Easy-to-use menus
- Huge player database and range of competitions

Why we'd leave it:

- Dreadful match highlights
- Over-simplistic transfers
- Quickly becomes routine

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT





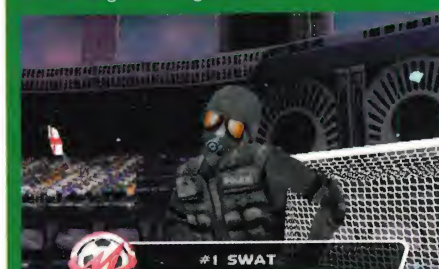
PITCH INVASION

Beat the defending continental teams in the World Conquest mode and you'll then face a final match against a mystery bonus opponent. Here are two of the crazy continentals you'll encounter.



Dolphins

Flipper and co defend the Oceanic continent, hopping around the undersea pitch on their powerful tails (which they also use to make dangerous sliding tackles).



SWAT Team

Beat the North American sides and you'll face a select XI of armoured, mask-wearing special operations officers. You play them on a pitch that's seemingly made of glass.

REDCARD

Scything tackles, two-footed lunges, studs-up challenges... Midway's kickabout is not so much the 'beautiful' game, but the 'brutal' game.

Publisher: Midway Developer: Midway Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2 Out: Now

The quest for football perfection is long, with most developers deciding that the holy grail is realism. Midway disagrees, deciding that the ideal football videogame would be something in the manner of a South American grudge match where all players were half-Maradona, half-Vinnie Jones, playing at 100mph and wearing sharpened studs.

array of International sides. Matches take place in six of the official Korea/Japan World Cup stadiums, with slick 3D graphics, realistic player names (if not player likenesses) and commentary by the BBC's Simon Brotherton and Sky pundit Chris Kamara. The action itself is viewed side-on (with five selectable levels of zoom). Notably, *RedCard* also features two power bars. The Turbo bar depletes as you sprint, ensuring that you can't spend the entire game running at full pelt. The Boost bar, meanwhile, lets you supercharge shots and tackles. Expend this bar's stored energy on a shoulder barge and it becomes a flying kick. Hold it down while shooting and your shot becomes a gravity-defying power-blast, cinematically presented in Bullet Time.



//Your shot becomes a gravity-defying power blast, cinematically presented in Bullet Time//

RedCard is an interpretation of the 'beautiful game' that revels in on- and off-the-ball violence, chaotic gameplay and special moves. You can play it as a straightforward football game, stringing together passes, lofting delicate through balls, playing friendly international matches and knock-out tournaments. But *RedCard* shouldn't be taken seriously. There is no offside rule and you're encouraged to shove, punch, hack and headbutt opposition players to get the ball and win the game.

Play a one-off friendly and you can choose from a vast

Alongside the custom Tournament mode is World Conquest, challenging you to dominate football by beating teams from the five continents. Each continent is represented by a number of national sides, plus a mystery team. Starting in Australia, you only need to win against the resident Soccerros and a team of footy-loving dolphins to complete the Oceanic continent. North America's honour is defended by three sides and a bonus SWAT team XI, while Asia boasts five teams and a tough line-up of Samurai warriors. The further you progress, the more teams stand in



your way. Adjustable difficulty levels and controls allow you to tailor the game to your preferences.

With its fast and furious gameplay and hectic violence, *RedCard* may not be realistic, but it's a great deal of fun – especially in Multiplayer mode. Offering a welcome alternative to *Pro Evolution Soccer*, it's over-enthusiastic and OTT in every department and while it may lack long-term appeal, it gives an extra dimension to the national sport. Yes it's football, but not as you know it. ■ Dean Evans

RED CARD

Why we'd buy it:
- Fast-paced, arcade action
- You can play dirty
- A great multiplayer title

Why we'd leave it:
- Slightly fiddly controls
- Its initial appeal soon starts to fade

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



WORDS: STEVE MERRETT/PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB SCOTT

TALKING BALLS

Take five football game developers, put them in one room, add copious quantities of food and drink. Then grill for two hours regarding the future of the beautiful game on PS2...

Sony's black box is rapidly turning into the home of football with a host of talented footy titles battling for victory out on the PS2 playing field. Leading the line-up is

Konami's masterful *Pro Evolution Soccer* with competition from the ever-popular and long-running *FIFA* series, *This Is Football 2002*, *UEFA Champions League: Season 2001/2002*, plus the likes of *David Beckham Soccer* warming up on the sidelines prior to release.

Each series has ambitions to be the definitive PS2 football champ and they all boast essential features such as motion-captured players and official team rosters. But where do they – and indeed the future of the football game – go from here? *OPS2* gathered the men behind the games and got them talking. Among topics discussed are the numbers of teams available, the quest for realism and the stresses of producing a licensed game. All are convinced their series has the quality to succeed – and this alone points to a very exciting future for the PS2 Premiership...

OPS2: Most of you have produced football titles for past formats, has this worked in your favour or did PS2 level the playing field?

BF: I think *This Is Football* on PSone has been beneficial to our experience when creating gameplay. PlayStation 2 brings new power, but without the experience of where we went wrong in the past, we couldn't be sure of not making the same mistakes again.

MB: We've had pretty much the same team working on *FIFA* since the beginning, and although different elements have changed, it's pretty much the same crux that has always been there. When you have produced four versions of the same game for one format, there's not a lot you can do aside from new graphics and extending the gameplay. As such, PS2 came as something of a relief to the development team as they were actually allowed to do a lot of stuff they had wanted to do for years.

DS: We had a difficult time because we had to do *UEFA Challenge* for PC, PSone and PS2 at the same time. We would've liked to have done the PS2 game from scratch, but had no time to learn the hardware, so we had to make do with what we already had. If we had our time again, we definitely would say 'PS2 only' and it would be a lot, lot better for it. I think with PS2 everybody expected a lot initially. People had images in their head as to how realistic the games should be, whereas you could get away with players with strange-looking heads in a PSone game.

CD: I must admit, I love the realism where PS2 lets you have players that look incredibly real. They have the shirts with the badges, proper faces and stadiums.

BF: It's a chance to show off, I guess, and those sort of things are going to become more important, especially when football games eventually go online since people will want to

show off what they can do to their mates.

OPS2: Saving goals to Memory Card is one impressive form of PS2 showing off. Do these kinds of touches have any repercussions for you as game developers?

MB: PS2 has lifted the cost of actually developing a competitive game. We have problems every year with someone where we don't put his licence in *FIFA* in the correct manner. There's something like 198 licences in *FIFA 2002* because we just can't afford to get sued by some Dutch licensee, say the De Boer brothers, and get the game pulled off the shelf. Because of that, and because you can now show what David Beckham looks like in the game and show the Man Utd kit, if you don't have that licence to do it, you can't make the game. It's getting ridiculous. It's getting like the real football industry.

CD: It's the same with our *Beckham* game. We can recreate realistic strips and have players that look like they should. But if there's a small point – say, the Man Utd shirt doesn't have Vodafone on it – it makes a difference. They know it's Manchester United, but it still seems to tarnish the game slightly.

DR: [Looks to Chris Dolman] You've worked on other games with a more open format, and now the *Beckham* game with an individual licence. You'll obviously have David Beckham looking like David Beckham, but are you going to struggle with everyone else – have you approached other people to get them in?

CD: We're concentrating on David Beckham and then there's a rough likeness to the other players. We have the real playmakers in there.

OPS2: Is that where the problems with *FIFPro* – the players' governing body – came in? Demanding cash for the use of real player images in the games?



Home of the Red Devils, Old Trafford is accurately rendered in Take 2's *UEFA Champions League*.

MB: FIFPro is the collective governing body for all the PFAs around the world, but many players have never heard of them.

BF: FIFPro is strange. We speak to the players' agents when we're looking to do commentaries and need to know if we can use certain names. A lot of them don't seem to know what FIFPro represents. I guess the average football player isn't interested in a 0.01p share of the royalties of your game, so they don't give a damn. Saying that, it would be ideal for me to record all the commentary for my game and know legally that I have an insurance policy that grants me full use of all players. Can't see it happening, though.

BF: We were actually the first team to use FIFPro and to bring them into the limelight. When they gave us their company logo, it was obvious that somebody had just typed out the word FIFPro and had blown it up to 48 point! Afterwards, one of their graphic artists saw what we had recreated for the game and said, "I'll take what you've done and just put a little swirl around it!" What we ended up with, we paid 200 grand for.

MB: We can't use FIFPro as many do, because no Dutch player, apart from Ruud van Nistelrooy and Edgar Davids, would admit to knowing anything about them. We had problems with the De Boer brothers last year, which is ongoing, so we've actually had to go out and do individual licences with the Premier League, the MLS and the Bundesliga. But there's no body for the Italian Serie A, so each team in Italy and the Spanish leagues had to be signed. With the costs of all the licences we paid for, EA could afford to buy the entire Manchester United squad! [Much laughter]. But obviously the return on the investment makes it worthwhile or we wouldn't do it.

DR: But at what point would it get so expensive that you'd stop in order to cover your arse?

MB: I don't know, but our royalty rate for FIFA is still less than our other licensed sports titles.

OPS2: But with such sky-high costs, is it going to get to a point one day where we won't see any new football games – just the same ones constantly updated?

MB: I think it's a shame but that is likely to be the case. If our product is pulled off the shelf a week after release because of a licensing problem, that's it, we've lost millions. And it isn't going to cost us millions to buy one particular licence to avoid such a problem. You need the money to be able to invest in those licences so you can actually release the game.

CD: From our point of view, we feel comfortable paying because we have the Beckham licence that will sell in a few units rather than just getting by. I don't see how you can do it without a name.

OPS2: The PS2 can do accurate player likenesses, so it should follow to have the names of your favourite players.

BF: It depends on whether the consumer is a hardcore gamer or not. He may not mind playing an unlicensed title like *Pro Evolution Soccer*, because the game plays brilliantly, regardless of whether he plays as 'real' Beckham or not. But I think when it comes to kids buying their first footy title, a big name is important.



//“I love the realism. PS2 lets you have players that look incredibly real” Chris Dolman, Rage//



Looking the part: David Beckham's likeness in *David Beckham Soccer* and Thierry Henry in *FIFA 2002*.

DR: I agree. I think the younger generations are the ones that fantasise about their favourite players and want to be them.

CD: I never used to think so, but I definitely do now. A load of kids were asking me at ECTS about player names in our game, and were really glad that they were in there. In this respect, I think a lot of us have actually been chasing FIFA in terms of content for a few years now. It's definitely one of those games where the name...

MB: [Interrupts] FIFA has given us nothing. What we get from the FIFA licence is four letters. We get to call our game FIFA and that's it. We don't get any rights apart from that.

CD: But I think that FIFA probably did it first with real clubs and we've all been chasing it since. We've all tried to match it in terms of leagues and teams, which is a compliment.

MB: Two or three years ago, we could all have released videogames with absolutely whatever

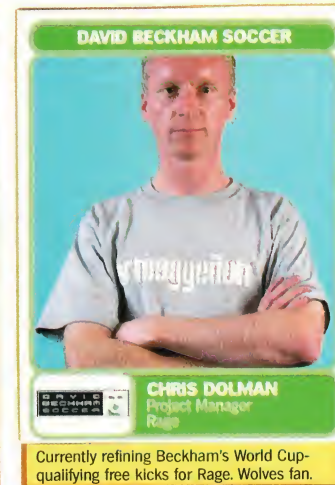
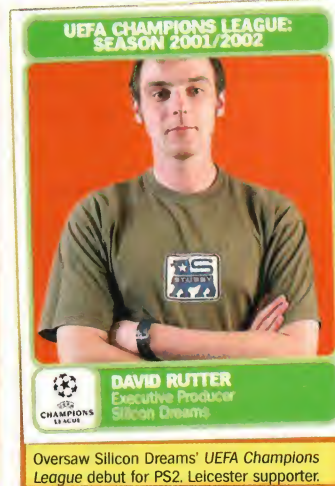
content we wanted, because the football associations didn't realise there was money to be had. But the games industry has now overtaken the film industry and it just takes one person to say, "Hey, I could make some cash out of these guys." Then people come in and say things like, "We're suing you as your game uses a free kick that looks just like Beckham's which he has a trademark on and you cannot use."

CD: I think we're okay with that one. [Laughs]

MB: We got a case last year, brought against us by the guy who started the Bosman ruling. We were like "Oh God..."

OPS2: Do you think you have to be a football fan to make a successful and playable game?

BF: I think the core team does – especially the AI guys. We've got artists who aren't fans, but that's not so important. Mind you, I've never met an artist in my career who wants to work on a football game!





It's not just about playing the game – cut-scenes are important too. (Above to right) David Beckham Soccer, This Is Football 2002, UEFA Challenge and UEFA Champions League.



DS: That's right. When you tell the artists that they'll be working on a football game you're always met with a loud groan!

MB: The decision-makers definitely need to be fans. You can't produce a football game and sign off something if you don't know the direction the game is heading and know nothing about football.

DR: But with the team in Canada, do you guys have much say over what's in FIFA?

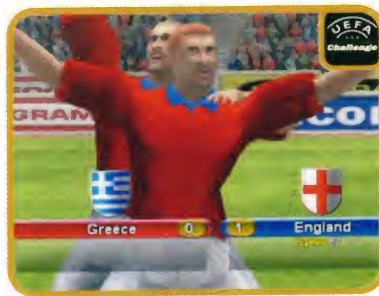
MB: I can go out to Canada for two weeks every six months, but in the last two years I've been there 28 times. Roughly 80 per cent of the FIFA team are non-Canadians, but then as much as they watch TV – and they do watch a lot of the Premier League – you cannot get up-to-date with what's happening in Europe and the UK over there. So, yes, we pretty much guide where the game is going.

DS: I always think it's more important to be a game fan. I think that people who claim to love football often don't understand it, and I think the key is balancing good gameplay with recognisable moves. When we designed UEFA Challenge, we created a back four system as used by most clubs and it was impossible to beat! Converting that into a game is the real issue. After all, marking is one thing, but it is never consistent. In FIFA, no matter where you are on the pitch, you know where the nearest player is. In Pro Evolution, you have to work at it much more – which isn't as immediate for the new player.

OPS2: Fair point. FIFA has had its detractors, but anyone can pick it up and play it. Perhaps the quest to produce a football game that totally recreates the skill and feel of the real thing is an impossible dream?

MB: It depends on what your goal is. If you're a hardcore gaming fan, are you making the game you love the most or are you making the game that will sell the most? EA is a massive games company that produces games to make money. But over the last couple of years, some of the decision-makers related to FIFA have just thought of it as a cash cow, adding a couple of changes, altering the logo, shipping it, and hoping it will keep going and going. We knew it had to change for the 2002 edition.

We asked the developers how long they had played FIFA 2001 after its release, and they said, "Three hours." We said, "You're not even playing the game you worked on? It must be shit." This year, we've moved the goal posts on. It was a case of 'just go away and create something you would enjoy but continue with the ability to pick up and play straight off. If it's not easy to play, we may as

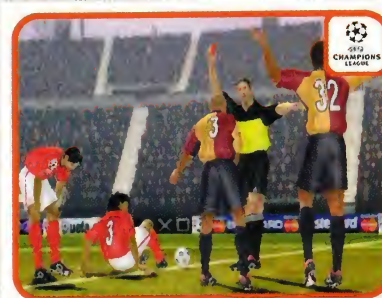


well create Pro Evolution. That would make a great game, but wouldn't have the breadth to appeal to everyone.

BF: I'd be interested to see how the Konami people saw their game: a hardcore football game or an arcade kickaround. (Looks at Chris Dolman) What about yours?

CD: We like both, but are not striving to copy either. Ours has got more speed and arcade-ness than FIFA. You can't score a goal from four yards by doing a bit of D-pad wiggling for aftertouch, but it's also more accessible than Pro Evolution. It seems to work, and we got a good reaction at ECTS. (Looks to Dave Rutter) What about yours?

DR: Ours has almost come full circle now. If you remember past versions, when it was WLS, it was arcade-like, but we made it a bit slower for Eidos' Michael Owen version. When we were working



BF: Speed was the thing we had the most trouble getting right in TIF. It's hard because the balance of the game revolves around the speed and passing, and if you get it wrong it upsets everything.

MB: What is 'too fast', though? I bet everyone around this table plays their football games at a different speed. And having the flexibility to easily change it is key.

DS: But you can take it too far. I worked briefly on Actua Soccer 3 and they had options for everything. Aftertouch on and off, sticky ball and whatever, and it just got confusing.

OPS2: So what ultimately makes for a perfect, real-world football game?

MB: Getting your priorities right is important. Developers can make a list of things they want to include, but boots that shimmer in the light is a



//“I want a game where Rivaldo actually plays like Rivaldo...”
Dave Saunders, Infogrames//

with Eidos, though, they were always going: "Make it FIFA, make it FIFA!"

DR: This is the problem. There's the commercial fixation where publishers want another FIFA with all the badges. So we did that. Now it's come full circle, with us bringing a game that, rather than dumb down, has a few more moves and clever things in there.

DS: It always seems to be the details that count with publishers. We told Infogrames that UEFA Challenge had crowds that leave if a match is dull and it was the first thing they listed on the back of the box!

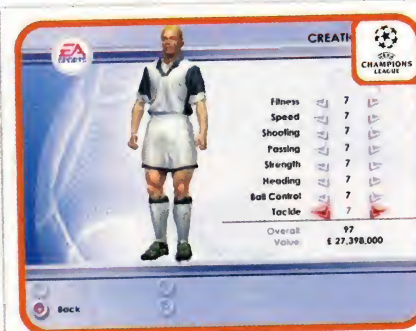
CD: [Turns to Dave Rutter] Dave, what you were saying about the speed settings is interesting as we got a really good reception to the ones in Beckham. I thought it was just one of those things we had to put in and was happy to do, but was surprised at the reaction.

low-profile element and should only be added if the gameplay elements are met. In FIFA 2002, it's possible to juggle the ball and catch it on your shoulder, but it's only in there because the artists had time to work on it.

DR: It's fine if you work in fiddling time. If you have playable code running and have a history of coming up with a good, playable game, anything else is a bonus.

CD: Provided your team is big enough to do it. If you only have a small team, you can lose direction. We already have three people on the game, and others to cram in loads of teams, loads of different people and heads. I do think we have to stay focused on those elements.

MB: It's always difficult. A FIFA game is always released in November, but due to legal reasons we have a lockout time of August, where all the major gameplay elements have to be completed.



Fans demand reams and reams of accurate stats in their football games.



However, the season doesn't start until two weeks later, so if Manchester United announces it's to be sponsored by, say, Cellnet and not Vodafone, we're f**ked.

CD: Do you think, though, that there are too many teams in football games these days? I do.

DR: I think that people want to be able to pick up the game and play as their club. If they can't play as, say, Leicester, they will be disconsolate. When our publishing deal with Eldos ended, we took *Champions League* to Sony, but it took one look at the game and said, "Not enough teams."

CD: So if we only put 40 in, we effectively alienate our market?

OPS2: Surely it adds flexibility? When West Ham bought Tomas Repka, for example, in *FIFA* it was possible to go to Fiorentina and transfer him to your squad. It comes back to using your favoured club.

MB: You shouldn't have to do that for much longer, though, and the new hardware platforms – especially for PS2 – mean you will be able to go online and update your teams automatically.

OPS2: Do you think that will end the annual *FIFA* releases?

MB: It will make sure that the annual update is actually an all-new game for the consumer.

DR: It'll probably work as some sort of online account wherein players pay a subscription, but can visit a Website to update their teams.

CD: At Rage, we'd like every team to play as they do in real life. So that there would be a difference in how, say, England and Brazil played. But when you've got between 50 and 400 teams in your product, it's difficult making them feel different.

DS: That what I'm looking for. I want a game where Rivaldo plays like Rivaldo, and I want to be able to learn from my teams. I mean, with all due respect, I can pick up *FIFA* and play as a Greek side I have never heard of, mainly because they all play the same. I want that individualism, where there is a definite difference in how they play.

OPS2: That's mission: impossible surely?

MB: Yes, but you can count on one hand the players in the world who have got things that are special to them. Zidane and Beckham, for instance, have special attributes that you can implement in a game, but how far do you go? It also opens other issues, like the other week I was informed that Beckham has put a trademark on his free kick. So if our game has a player in a red,



number seven shirt curling a kick with his right foot like that, they can start charging.

DS: With *UEFA Challenge*, we were keen that players played to each team's strengths. You could set the wingbacks to attack and do passes for a tall front man to meet, or have Zidane in the centre passing it about.

MB: I think the important thing is the feeling that, if you're playing as Spurs against Manchester United, the game gives Man Utd a personality. That I know to play defensively against them, yet I know that when I play Southampton next I can go all-out attack as they are weaker. This is what PS2 lets you do.

CD: I think PS2 lets us make what looks like Leicester, Villa or whoever, but they don't play like them. Because we can make it look real now, we need to lift it so it's like playing against these teams. You can't do that with so many teams, so maybe my earlier point of cutting the teams down is the answer. A good football game is a good football game, and I think we've all lost touch in the last five years as to what makes one good. I think we've lost track. We've got too many teams and too many competitions...

CD: But would they be happy with 50 teams even if it didn't have theirs in it? Or must it include theirs, down to the smallest detail?

MB: But if you want to sell a game in Israel, you need Israeli teams. The same goes for Greece. And the only reason they want it is because they see English and French leagues and want the same. But where do you stop?

OPS2: Moving away from the teams issue, is there anything you still want to implement? In *TIF 2002*, players are even booked for diving. Could other elements make their way in?

MB: Handballs and nutmegs would be great,



but there are some elements EA can't put in. We can't have violence, for example, with players headbutting each other, because we don't want young kids to get a bad impression of the sport.

CD: I think adding specific attributes to players as well. For example, if you have a player like Roy Keane he'd be more likely to go in with a two-footed challenge.

DS: We had something like that in *UEFA*...

DR: [Nodding] Yeah, we've got an aggression factor as well.

MB: Things that happen randomly, too. I was playing *FIFA 2002* yesterday and playing as England against our Swedish territory manager, who was Sweden. I was being held 1-1 with just seconds to go and he had a last ditch shot that Seaman caught, dropped and tried to chase before it went in the net. It was so annoying, but it happens. I think such things have to be attributed to a certain factor, though, so someone like David James is more likely to make that mistake than, say, Seaman.

OPS2: So, bearing in mind you're now adding individual players, key specific attributes and so on, are we any closer to the definitive football game?

DR: No, but we are producing good PS2 versions, which is what counts right now.

DS: [Blows his cheeks out] No. Until I'm playing a game as, say, England and I can see Becks to my right calling for the pass and an opposing player moving in, I don't think we will.

MB: [Smiling] We're getting there, though. ■

Okay, so there's little to tell them apart when you look at the screenshots, but it's how these games play that really counts.



And we give you the Daddy... Konami's KCE Tokyo team were sadly unable to make the trip over to London for our roundtable, but no football feature would be complete without a few shots of the sublime *Pro Evolution Soccer*.





COMBAT SPORTS

Get ready to rumble with our reviews of the best fighting sports games on PS2.

P 28 WWF SMACKDOWN! 'JUST BRING IT!'



Behold! The great big mullet-headed king of the wrestling sim, in all its muscular glory.

P 31 LEGENDS OF WRESTLING



Grappling meets a few gameplay innovations in this poor hick cousin of THQ's WWF daddy.

P 32 KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002



Choose your all-time favourite heavyweight and enter the ring of simulated pain in EA Sport's comprehensive, realistic boxing game.

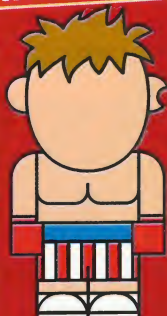
P 33 MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING



The fearsome, ear-munching multiple offender smacks some heavyweight bitches up in Codemasters' knockout fighter.

WITH EXPERT ANALYSIS BY...

Illustration: c.mattishoo.com 2002



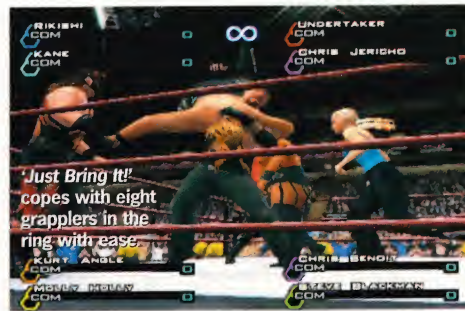
Rocky Dumboa
Punch drunk pugilist turned befuddled, trembling pundit.



Lars Bandit
Camp grappling Swede. Terrifies opponents with cheap innuendo.



"Guess where my gloved fist is going, boy!"



"With over 70 game modes and all the butchest warriors, 'JBI!' has more grappling options than a bangkok sauna. But the unresponsive fight system means I don't always have full control in the ring. No change there, then."

WWF SMACKDOWN! 'JUST BRING IT!'

Weighing in at 45 pounds (sterling) from Yokohoma, Japan, it's the wrestling game big daddy.



Publisher: THQ Developer: Yuke's Price: £44.99 Players: 1-4 Out: Now

Let's say it like it is. 'JBI!' isn't a revolution in wrestling games. But neither has Yuke's – the grapple game expert, responsible for the SmackDown titles on PSone – been sitting backstage buffing its title belts, pausing only to slap a coat of next-gen visuals on the franchise. What the team has achieved here is the most faithful and thoroughly entertaining recreation of the WWF phenomenon ever seen. And they've done this by using the PS2 to add depth to a much loved core game. Load this bad boy up and aside from a new thunder and lightning front end design, those who've played 'Know Your Role' will instantly feel at home. For newbies, however, a brief rundown on the ensuing menu minefield is in order.

Story mode is waiting for gamers who want to get stuck into the full, punishing WWF season, playing as either an existing Superstar (there are 35 to choose from) or one of your own home-made rookies. Exhibition mode acts as a grappling pick 'n' mix allowing you to go hog wild with a staggering 78 styles of match. These are divided between ten main categories: Single, Tag, Six Man Tag, Handicap,

Royal Rumble, King Of The Ring, Hardcore, Falls Count Anywhere, Survival and Special (phew). Some of these are self-explanatory and nearly all involve variations on the theme of pinning your opponent(s) down for a count of three either alone or with help. Handicap, for example, pits you against multiple opponents. Royal Rumble has a succession of grapplers entering a chaotic free-for-all, with the aim to be the last one still in the ring at the end. King



//Hardore sees wrestlers slugging it out with weapons including a guitar and a mannequin's head//

Of The Ring sets up a mini season of sudden death play-offs for the title, whereas Falls Count Anywhere makes a mode of the WWF tendency for grudge matches to kick off outside of the arena. Corridors, dressing rooms, Times Square. They're all here. Hardcore sees wrestlers slugging it out with props/weapons including an acoustic guitar, a mannequin's head and a fine selection of folding furniture while Survival is the closest 'JBI!' comes to a recognisable beat-'em-up staple. With each of these Exhibition modes revealing multiplayer and CPU player options (Triple Threat through Fatal Four Way to Eight Man Battle Royal), those 78 match styles start to add up pretty damn quickly.

OUT AND ABOUT

Falls Count Anywhere matches open up a wealth of extra-curricular showdown locations. Here's just a handful and where it could all lead.



1. Commissioner's Room.
 Features: William Regal's Union Jack and mini bar.
 Exits to: Corridor.



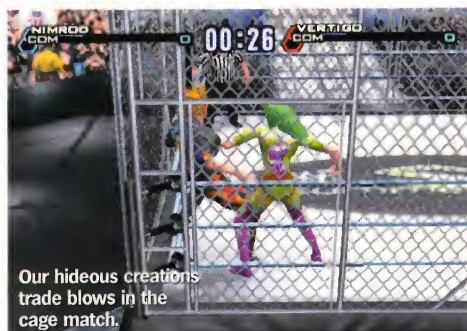
2. Lobby
 Features: Dual-level action, concession stand and a wide selection of vending machines.
 Exits to: Stage, Plaza and Corridor.



3. Plaza
 Features: Amazing scale.
 Exits to: Lobby, Parking, WWF Times Square.



4. Parking
 Features: Very few cars and grimy asphalt.
 Exits to: Corridor, Plaza.



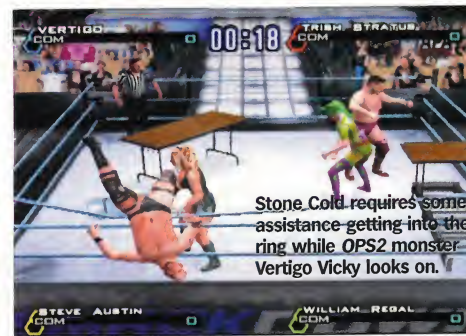
Our hideous creations trade blows in the cage match.



The piggyback/dutch rub combo is unleashed by Kurt Angle with humiliating efficiency on a dazed Chris Benoit.



"Arrghh! my ears! My beautiful, ears!"



Stone Cold requires some assistance getting into the ring while OPS2 monster Vertigo Vicky looks on.

//The Slobberknocker is not as filthy as it sounds but your wrestler will end up sweaty//

And then there's the warped menagerie of matches herded under the suspiciously restrained heading 'Special'. If you were unfamiliar with a One On Tag Handicap match then prepare to be flummoxed by the options here. Suffice to say, Ironman doesn't feature any metal clad Marvel superheroes, TLC does not stand for Tender Loving Care and a Cage Match does exactly what it says on the tin. As for the Slobberknocker, well it's not nearly as filthy as it sounds but your wrestler will end up sweaty and exhausted all the same. Here, as in most areas, 'JBI!' announces itself primarily as a game for the initiated. But since the controls are the same no matter which match you go for, this is unlikely to become a barrier to enjoyment. Don't know what an I Quit match is? Just plough on in and the details will hit you. (In this case the detail in question being a microphone wielded by a wrestler with the upper fist).

Of course any grapple fan worth his or her salt is going to head straight for the Story mode and this is where the developer has been working up a real sweat in order to give players their money's worth.

MY LITTLE WRESTLER

You could choose to take a pre-existing 'face' or 'heel' under your wing and via the Story mode shape their career. You could, but then you'd miss a real treat in the totally overhauled Create A Superstar mode offering the chance to build yourself a champion from the straggly mullet down. What was an enjoyable but limited feature in PSone's

gendered clones in fetching blue trolleys, you build shoulder width, limb length, hand size. Hell, you can even set the density of your wrestler's head. Then there are ten pages of noses. Eyebrows go from plucked supermodel to Gallagher unibrow and hair comes in three separate categories: front, top and back. Four if you count chest hair.

Each creation has 30 different possible layers for you to assign anything from pinkie rings and kneepads to tattoos, shoes, shirts and horns (yes, horns). And with many of these items you can change length, colour, opacity and so on. Of course, you may only end up using five layers for the basic 'shreddies and scowl' look.

But that's not the half of it. Once you've finalised your superstar's look it's time to give the rookie some smarts to guide them in the ring. Distributing an initial core of experience points that are subsequently added to during the wrestler's career, you must decide how speedy, technical, powerful and roughneck your protégé's fighting style will be from match one. Then you can select from over 1,000 possible moves, taunts, blows and throws (including all the superstars' moves) to create a unique fighting personality. You can also import an existing star's roster of moves to give Junior an instant head start in the WWF. All that remains is to give it a name, personalise the signs the audience members wave, make those difficult entrance video, music and gesture decisions and, if it's not already four in the morning, then it's finally time to get in the ring and get grappling.

SmackDown! 2 has been developed into a creative experience that's so comprehensive it's nearly a game all by itself. Starting with a pair of blank looking



OPS2's very own superstar makes Stone Cold Steve Austin see stars.

THE BIG DADDY?

And so to the match gameplay. Why wait so long to come to it? Well, put simply it feels the least evolved of the franchise's many excellent features. The animations are wonderfully fluid and opponent AI is punishing in all the right ways but there's a lack of real intelligence to the way your wrestler interacts with his or her opponents. Different moves are triggered by a combination of buttons and D-pad married to your grappler's relative position to your intended victim within the ring. Pull off a throw and you've got to wait until the animation ends before you can follow it up. Fail to get in quickly enough and you could be waiting even longer as the other wrestler knocks you senseless and goes to town on you for a prolonged, albeit

very entertaining, GBH session.

There's an inherent lack of responsiveness here that beat-'em-ups deliver as a matter of course. True, 'JBI!' isn't strictly a beat-'em-up, but for the series to grow into its new home on PS2, it would be a smart move to engage player skill on a higher level by allowing them to build moves in a true combo style. Ironically, by making an exemplary recreation of this 'sports entertainment' it's just possible that the natural balance tips a little too far towards the 'entertainment' at the cost of the 'sport'.

But maybe that's the whole point. 'JBI!' is a blast to play and as full-on entertainment is hard to beat. Get your mates huddled around a MultiTap with their own Memory Card-stored superstars and the game will sweep the lot of



The game's many camera angles do a fine job of framing the play-by-play action to maximum effect.

you into some fantastically bone-crunching rumbles in no time. And since you can now take the fight into the audience and have a total of nine wrestlers slugging it out in the arena at once, you won't be wanting for things and people to do.

Add a largely successful play-by-play commentary by none other than ringside regulars Michael Cole and Tazz, and WWF SmackDown! 'Just Bring It!' is as complete a package as you could hope for. When you consider the sheer wealth of options and elements to personalise here, and the overall quality of presentation, you can't help but be impressed by the developer's achievement. If the core gameplay had evolved to match the depth of options this would be a genre-trampling essential purchase. All the same, it remains a must-have for WWF fans and a refreshingly tongue-in-cheek alternative to all the straight-faced martial arts action out there. ■ Paul Fitzpatrick

WWF SMACKDOWN! 'JUST BRING IT!'

Why we'd buy it:
- Staggering wealth of options
- Creating a wrestler is fun

Why we'd leave it:
- Gameplay doesn't always reward skill

08

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

'Tis a brave game indeed that includes the words 'legends' and 'wrestling' in the same sentence. But not necessarily a good one...



Nice to see Hulk Hogan's getting some, erm, 'work' after Mr Nanny.



Smack that @ button down to lay the moves on your favourite wrestler. Nice bin throw, by the way.



"The new popularity feature - in which wrestlers must show-off to gain more fans - is great: it reminds me of Pop Idol. But apart from that, this game is as flaccid as Steve Austin's jockstrap after a right Royal Rumble."

Publisher: **Acclaim** Developer: **Acclaim** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

Legends Of Wrestling boldly attempts to push the 'sports-entertainment' envelope by basing your chosen grappler's success primarily on how popular they are, relegating match results to secondary status. The setup is based around the ancient US wrestling territories system in which you had to win the championship in each of five regions before being able to challenge for the world title.

In order to qualify for each title shot, you must trawl around the local circuit until you've gained the requisite degree of popularity. This is gained through putting on entertaining performances, be that through utilising a range of combos, pulling off special moves, drawing blood from

your opponent or even knocking down the referee.

It's an interesting, unique device, but not without its flaws. With the emphasis taken away from winning each match, you lose much of the impetus for victory. And while losing matches does impede your progress, ultimately it all comes down to blind perseverance above skill. Indeed, there's little in the game to grasp. While each of the 42 characters has their own moves, they're all triggered in the same way so - unlike a game along the lines of Tekken - once you've mastered one character you've sussed them all.

Don't expect to be overwhelmed by Legends' wrestling 'superstars' either. As the name suggests, the roster is decidedly old school, with much of it consisting of mat merchants who are either retired or dead. Only a handful - such as Hulk Hogan, Bret Hart or Rob Van Dam - ever stumbled anywhere near the mainstream.

Legends also disappoints when it comes to the selection of modes and options that it offers. Unlike WWF SmackDown! 'Just Bring It!' there are no Table, Cage or Hardcore matches, and no backstage areas. The moral? A smattering of quirky new ideas combined with an overload of tenebrous wrestlers doth not a cool game make.

■ Oliver Hurley

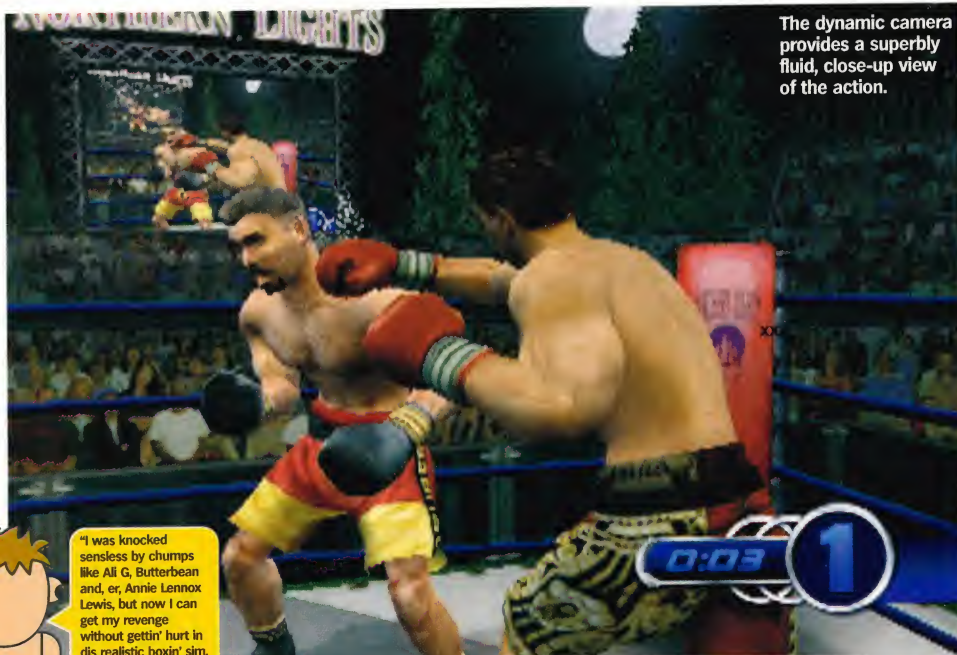
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

Why we'd buy it:
- The popularity rating
- Reversals add to gameplay

Why we'd leave it:
- Too much button-bashing
- Obscure characters
- SmackDown! is far better

05

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



The dynamic camera provides a superbly fluid, close-up view of the action.



"I was knocked senseless by chumps like Ali G, Butterbean and, er, Annie Lennox Lewis, but now I can get my revenge without gettin' hurt in dis realistic boxin' sim. Upper cut! Jab! No! He knocked me out! Adrian! Adrian!"

Someone's going to be seeing stars...

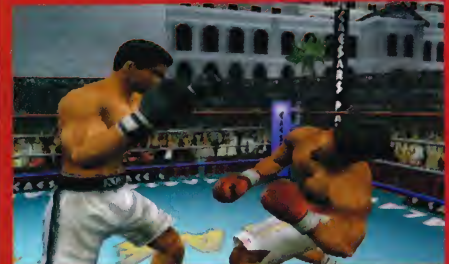


Lennox takes on The Greatest. We'd put our money on Ali for a fourth round KO.



SCHOOL OF HARD LENNOX

Instantly recognisable boxers and realistic fighting action leans the judges in favour of Knockout Kings 2002.



Glass chin? Moi? Not on this occasion – bobbing and weaving is the best way for Lennox to keep Ali at bay. This is achieved by an inner circle on the left Analogue stick that controls your torso movements. The outer circle controls your feet.



Throw that illegal backhand – but if you miss you'll leave yourself so wide open that even American bombers wouldn't be able to miss.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

The biggest stars of boxing gather to smack each others' faces round in EA's richly licensed ring of simulated heavyweight violence.

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Sports Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2 Out: Now

Critics slated previous incarnations of *Knockout Kings* for being little more than button-bashing slugfests, lacking both depth and variety. *Knockout Kings 2002* bucks the trend with a quality range of boxers, improved game dynamics and a variety of real-life arenas that'll have you reaching for the gumshield seconds from the bell.

Your arsenal comprises a basic setup of left-jab,

the rumbling on your joystick reflecting your boxer's state of play. When you feel a heartbeat pumping through your fingertips, you know that it's best to avoid punches on the bonce, but your opponent will not. As with the real thing you have to look for clues in your opponent's behaviour.

Another great feature is the ability to customise your own boxer from the boots up to the hair-do. You'll start out scrapping in some low-lit joint before earning points, improving your stats, and stepping out with the big boys. And to stop you just bumping your stats up to full on the most basic areas – power and speed – you use double

credit points once you're over the 75 mark. This increases progressively as you approach the 100 max.

While there is praise to be heaped upon *KK2002*, it's not without its

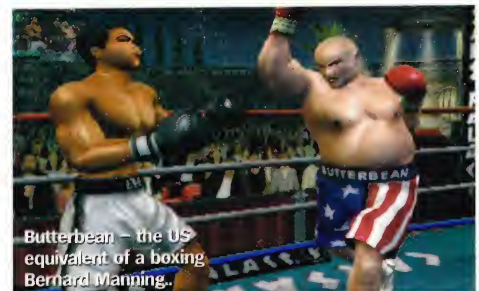
faults. Choosing Muhammad Ali as the lead character, complete with all the max-stats a boxer of his calibre warrants, rather overshadows the other pugilists available, making all the other big names EA signed up a little surplus to requirements. Another new feature which misfires is the widescreen cinematic replay of knockdowns. While the facial contortion may look great, it's sad to say that, like an innocuous challenge sending Emile Heskey falling to the grass, the combatants never seem to make real contact.



//You start out in some low-lit joint before improving your stats and stepping out with the big boys//

straight-right, left-hook and right-hook, with adept use of shoulder buttons transforming these into upper cuts or crafty low blows. While such simplicity ensures you can have a good scrap straight off, mastering the game requires a lot of application. For example, the standard blocking move isn't really in the spirit of the game, so employing the torso moves to dodge punches proves to be both more flexible and stylish.

Health meters are wisely kept off-screen by default, with



Butterbean – the US equivalent of a boxing Bernard Manning..

Another downer is the fixed disqualifying limit: you always get chucked out on the fourth instance whenever you flail a backhand or deal a low blow. You should be able to risk more by throwing these – sometimes getting pulled up on your third, sometimes being able to really push it before you are disqualified. Less predictability please.

Aside from these minor complaints, *Knockout Kings 2002* is an extremely enjoyable game, and a big step up from its predecessors. ■ Ross Cottingham

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

Why we'd buy it:
- A boxing sim without a glass chin
- Takes months to master

Why we'd leave it:
- Frustrating if one opponent keeps on busting your ass

07

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



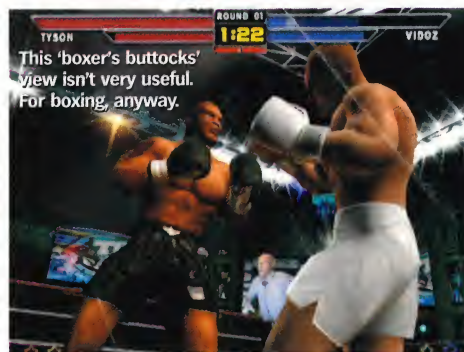
Spit flies as the blows rain in. It's so realistic you'll get punch drunk.



"I coulda taken Tyson, but he, er, he bit off my nipple in a press conference and spat it at Don King. I lost a lotta blood. Anyways, this game matches sim-like depth and controls with cartoon fun. Heh, I like cartoons. [Dribble]"



Maskaev falls for the 'stare at the end of this glove' trick with fatal consequences.



This 'boxer's buttocks' view isn't very useful. For boxing, anyway.



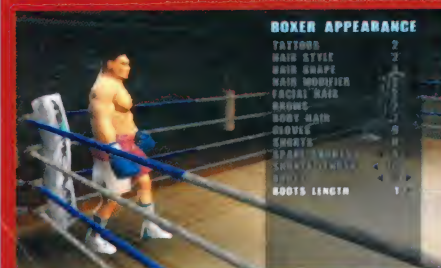
CREATE-A-NUTTER

A wealth of options ensures that your own boxer really will look completely psycho.

The Create mode is impressive by virtue of the inclusion of such obscure elements as disposition (ranging from neutral to psycho, although surely everyone will go for the latter?) and head shape (which allows you to adjust such vital components as 'cheek droop' and 'brow extrude'). Sadly, though, the more sensible options are lacking: for example, there's no gym option with which to improve your character's stats.



'Celebrity chef' Anthony Worrell Thompson works off a few deer roulades.



Boot length may not be key to success but neither are tattoos. Or this fighter's wobbly man bosoms.



MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

No ear-chewing, no leg-biting and, to begin with, no Mike Tyson... So what exactly does 'the gentleman of boxing' do in this game?

Publisher: Codemasters Developer: Codemasters Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2 Out: Now

If getting into the ring – or even attending a press conference – with 'Iron' Mike Tyson remains one of pro boxing's scarier propositions, such fears won't be realised in this game. At least, not to begin with. This is because the self-proclaimed 'baddest man on the planet' isn't actually a playable character at the start of the game.



//Desperate pounding of the buttons is necessary to coerce your fighter back to his feet//

Instead, out of Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing's 17 fighters, the man whose name is on the box is the last one that can be unlocked. So, if you don't have the inclination to work your way through the game's main Title Belt mode, you may never actually have the opportunity to play as the game's star attraction. Which is a bit odd.

Like PSone's Prince Naseem Boxing, MTHB blends elements from both the more sim-orientated Knockout Kings and the over-the-top arcade-style gameplay of Ready 2 Rumble. The main thrust is the aforementioned Title Belt

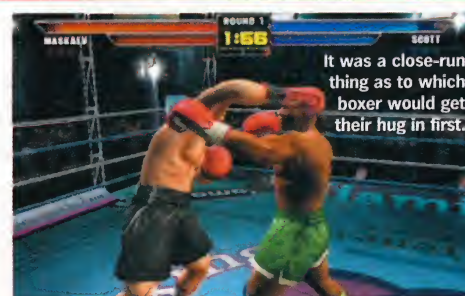
option and this is where the wealth of hidden characters and game modes can be unlocked – the idea being that the player is given constant rewards for their progress.

MTHB handles pleasingly well, features a well-designed interface and boasts enough excitement and variety to retain interest. To begin with – as is the temptation in any fighting game – frantic button bashes will lead to early victory in the first two bouts. Progression through the game relies on a more considered and strategic approach, though.

To further the action, each fighter has two power gauges. The top one is a bog-standard energy bar which, when fully depleted, results in your pugilist slumping to the canvas. When this happens, desperate pounding of the

joypad buttons is necessary to coerce your fighter back to his feet before the referee delivers the mandatory '10-count'. The second bar indicates punching power. Throw too many blows too quickly and the bar rapidly decreases rendering any future shots weak, with very little damaging impact. It's a simple yet effective system that ensures there's a fair degree of tactics involved during a fight.

Each character has their own unique style (far more pronounced in some boxers than in others). Oleg Maskaev, for instance, has an unorthodox system, easily identifiable



It was a close-run thing as to which boxer would get their hug in first.

by his swooping overhead attacks. Other fighters have little to set them apart bar their reach or recovery times. So rather than playing as different characters, you'll be more inclined to pick one you like and stick with him.

Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing is a successful blend of the cartoony Ready 2 Rumble with a more in-depth fighting system. The roster itself and the proportion of the game that is inaccessible to begin with are disappointing, but it's a rounded and entertaining box-em-up. ■ Oliver Hurley

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Why we'd buy it:

- Accessible yet deep fighting system
- Plenty to keep you busy

Why we'd leave it:

- Can't play as Tyson at the start of game
- Does get quite repetitive

07

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

TOP 10 SPORTING HEROES

Sport is aspirational. Even if you're just having a kickabout in the park you imagine you're Michael Owen rounding the Argentine defence and scoring the winning goal at the World Cup finals. Sporting heroes add glamour to even the dreariest of events and instant kudos to licensed sports sims. Here then are the ten (okay, eleven, we had to cheat as two were inseparable) greatest sporting legends. Figures who have transcended their chosen sport to become globally recognised icons of popular culture (and, in many cases, stars of their very own games). If you haven't pretended to be them while playing a videogame, you're not doing it right. Approach with reverence...

10th

TONY HAWK

■ Sport: Skateboarding ■ Nationality: American ■ Age: 34
■ Career honours: Winner, National Skateboard Association Championships, 1984-93; Winner, X-Games, '97, '98 and '99 (vert doubles competition). Performed first ever 900° jump, 1999.

From his first competition as a pro in 1983 to his retirement in 1999, Tony Hawk WAS skateboarding. Not only did he win every major event in the boarding calendar during his competitive career, he also invented over 50 key moves in the process including the nosegrind, stale fish and backside varial. His last act as a professional was to perform the first ever 900°, a half-pipe jump in which the boarder spins two and a half times in the air. It was the skating equivalent of walking on the moon. Over the past three years, Neversoft's *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* has become one of the world's most successful videogame licenses, effectively bringing the legend of the Hawkster and the language and skills of the sport to an enormous audience of sofa skaters. ■

AS SEEN IN...



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

Capturing the feel of the sport better than any board-'em-up before or since, Neversoft's X-Games classic is a must-buy whether you're into skateboarding or not.

9th

BJÖRN BORG

■ Sport: Tennis ■ Nationality: Swedish ■ Age: 45
■ Career honours: Wimbledon champion 1976-80; French Open winner 1974, 75, 78-81; US Open finalist, 1976, 78, 80, 81.

Pete Sampras may be the most successful player in history, but Bjorn Borg has more charisma in his trademark headband than the American star manages in his entire body. Originally excelling as a clay court player, Borg took his first French Open title at the age of 18, showing off a famously powerful two-handed backhand shot, developed through playing ice hockey. In 1976, the Swede adapted his style of play to suit the serve-volley dominated world of grass court tennis and won five Wimbledon titles in a row – his epic battles with John McEnroe providing some of the most exciting and entertaining moments in the sport's history. However, unlike McEnroe and his compatriot, Jimmy Connors, Borg always kept his emotions in check, earning him the imaginative nickname 'Ice Borg'. He retired at the mystifyingly young age of 26, but his belting baseline play has been a major influence on many subsequent players, particularly Andre Agassi. Incidentally, Borg recently set up a website warning of the dangers of a rapidly aging society and urging visitors to 'F**k For The Future'. Pete Sampras will probably never do that. ■

Image: ©EMPICS

8th

DALEY THOMPSON

■ Sport: Decathlon
■ Nationality: British ■ Age: 44
■ Career honours: Olympic gold medal
winner 1980 and 84; World Champion, 1983;

Possibly the finest all round athlete Britain has ever produced, Daley Thompson dominated the gruelling decathlon for almost a decade and was unbeaten between 1978 and 1986. At the height of his career the moustachioed marvel was renowned for his arrogance and attitude; famously choosing to whistle through the National Anthem on the winner's podium at the 1984 Olympics. He also turned up at a press conference during the same event with the slogan 'Is the world's second greatest athlete gay?' written across his T-shirt, a reference to US sprint legend Carl Lewis. However, these crazy antics pale into insignificance beside Thompson's epic duels with the German decathlete Jurgen Hingsen, that saw the Brit winning medals and breaking world records galore. Probably Daley's proudest achievement though, was lending his name to fondly remembered ZX Spectrum button bashing sports sim, *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* (one of the very first licensed computer games). After retiring from athletics, Thompson tried his hand at football, playing for Reading reserves in the mid-Nineties. He is now an athletics coach and occasional TV presenter. He still has the moustache. ■

THE FINEST 'TACHES IN SPORT

1. Merv Hughes (Cricket)
2. Daley Thompson (Decathlon)
3. Nigel Mansell (Formula One)
4. David Wilkie (Swimming)
5. Fatima Whitbread (Javelin)

STEVE REDGRAVE

■ Sport: Rowing ■ Nationality: British
■ Age: 40 ■ Career honours: Olympic gold
medalist 1984-2000, World Championship gold
medalist 86, 87, 91, 93-95, 97-99.

As the first British athlete in history to win five consecutive Olympic gold medals, Sir Steven Redgrave has achieved the seemingly impossible by making a significant portion of the UK population give a damn about rowing (previously viewed as an expensive diversion for public school kids). Redgrave earned his first medal at the World Junior Rowing Championships in 1980 and went on to win dozens of competitions in sculling, coxless pairs and coxless fours. Suffering from diabetes, and being generally knackered, Redgrave retired from rowing after the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, famously announcing, "If anyone sees me anywhere near a boat, they have permission to shoot me." Days later, however, he changed his mind and began preparing for his final glorious triumph at the Sydney Olympics. A true one-off. ■

7th

Image: ©EMPICS

6th

AYRTON SENNA

■ Sport: Formula One
■ Nationality: Brazilian ■ Born: 1960
■ Died: 1994 ■ Career honours: World Formula One champion 1988, 1990, 1991, runner-up 1989, 1993.

Regarded as a national hero in Brazil, Ayrton Senna was arguably the most skilful and intensely competitive star F1 has ever produced. He entered the sport in 1984 and quickly gained a reputation for a ruthless and daring style of driving, which didn't always endear him to his rivals. After racing for Toleman, then Lotus, Senna joined McLaren in 1988 where he won his first championship – two more would follow. Then, in May 1994, on the seventh lap of the San Marino Grand Prix, Senna's Williams Renault car left the track at 130 mph and ploughed into a safety barrier. His funeral was a state occasion in Brazil with hundreds of thousands of people lining the route of the procession. There is still controversy surrounding the exact cause of the crash. ■

Image: ©EMPICS

5th

DON BRADMAN

■ Sport: Cricket ■ Nationality: Australian ■ Born: 1908
■ Died: 2001 ■ Career honours: Test cricket average 99.94 runs, total number of runs 6996.

Easily the most successful batsman in cricket history, Bradman dominated the game between 1928-1948, falling just one run short of an incredible 100 batting average (the next closest is 60). The prolific legend was selected to play for New South Wales when he was just 19 years-old and made his debut for Australia against England in the 1928-29 test series. He went on to score 29 hundreds in his twenty year career (19 against England), including several double centuries and two triple centuries. Between 1936 and 1948, Bradman was made captain of an Australian side that won 11 tests to England's three. His batting was so successful that, in 1932, England captain Douglas Jardine devised a new style of bowling to keep the Aussie's score down. They aimed at his chest, an infamous technique referred to as bodyline. Predictably, Bradman's batting average barely suffered. In his last test match Bradman needed just four runs to average 100 per game. Tragically, English bowler Eric Hollies got him out for a duck. The Don was knighted in 1949 and his legend has only continued to grow in the years since his retirement. ■

Image: ©EMPICS

AS SEEN IN...



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002

The best golf sim on PS2. EA Sports' title has a great, innovative control system and a playable Tiger (he's the most accomplished player in the game, naturally).

4th

TIGER WOODS

■ Sport: Golf ■ Nationality: American ■ Age: 26
 ■ Career honours: British Open winner, 2000; US Open winner, 2000; US Masters winner, 1997, 2001, 2002; US PGA Championship winner, 1999, 2000.

Golf pretty much is the life of Eldrick 'Tiger' Woods – nicknamed after a Vietnamese soldier befriended by his father during 'Nam. Tiger appeared on a US TV show at just two-years old, putting with Bob Hope, and before the age of five he was regularly finishing nine holes in 48 shots. After a record-breaking amateur run, he played his first professional tournament at 16 and won the US Masters five years later – the first black player to do so, making him a major role model to the African American community. At 21 he was also the youngest player ever to rank number one in the world. From here on, records fell at his feet like big, glittery golf balls. When Woods lifted the 82nd PGA Championship trophy in 2000, he became the first player since Ben Hogan in 1953 to win three major competitions in one year. Later, having won the 2001 US Masters, he was the first player in history to hold all four major trophies at the same time. More recently he became only the third player – after Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo – to win back-to-back Masters. Like Pete Sampras, Woods has been credited with a complete technical mastery of his sport, but also draws criticism for his clinical approach. Woods probably isn't bothered: with seven wins in the majors already, he's well on his way to reaching the staggering record of 18 major victories, held by the great Jack Nicklaus. ■

MICHAEL JORDAN

■ Sport: Basketball ■ Nationality: American ■ Age: 39 ■ Career honours: NBA Championship winner, 1991-3, 96, 97 (with Chicago Bulls); NBA Rookie of the year 94-95; NBA Most Valuable Player 1988, 91, 92, 96, 98.

Selected by the Chicago Bulls in the 1984 NBA Draft, Michael Jordan spent the next decade establishing himself as the greatest player in basketball history. In 1986-87 he became the first player since Wilt Chamberlain to make over 3,000 points in a season and has won every individual award going during his career, including Most Valuable Player five times. At the close of the 1988-89 season he scored the most dramatic two points in hoops history, netting in the last millisecond of game five in a play-off series against Cleveland, to give the Bulls a 101-100 victory. Two years later he helped the Bulls to the first in an all-conquering run of NBA Championships. Then he shocked the basketball world by retiring from the sport in 1993 to fulfill his childhood dream of playing minor league baseball. Jordan lasted one season with the Birmingham Barons before re-joining the Bulls at the close of the '94-'95 season. He arrived too late – and too rusty – to make an immediate impact, but the following season he guided the Bulls to their fourth championship of the Nineties and then won it again in '97 with a series-winning jump shot in the last second against Utah. Jordan's influence goes way beyond basketball. In the mid-Eighties, he signed a licensing deal with Nike and the company's Air Jordan boots became the essential fashion icons of the early hip-hop era. He has also starred in several films and videogames. At his peak, Jordan was stunningly balletic, often toying casually with the laws of gravity with slamdunks that appeared to begin at the halfway line. Last year, he came out of retirement once again to help the unfancied Washington Wizards and while he can no longer soar quite so high, his influence remains just as strong. One thing's for sure: mention the number 23 to anyone, anywhere in the world, and they'll think of this man. ■

3rd

AS SEEN IN...



NBA Street

The great Mr Jordan is a playable character in EA Sports BIG's urban hoops game. And he's so damn good it's virtually cheating to have him in your team.

THE ALL-TIME GREATEST XI



2nd DIEGO MARADONA

■ Sport: Football ■ Nationality: Argentinian ■ Age: 41
■ Career honours: World Cup winner, 1986; World Player of the Year, 1986; Spanish Cup winner, 83 (Barcelona); Serie A Championship, 87, 90 (Napoli); UEFA Cup, 89 (Napoli)

Nobody has ever controlled a football like Maradona. At the height of his powers, the diminutive yet stocky Argentinian made experienced defenders look like confused schoolboys. Although strictly an attacking midfield player, he was a regular top scorer with his club sides and crafted vital goals for Argentina (many of them without the help of his hand). At 16 he became the youngest Argentinian player to represent his country. Spells at Boca Juniors and Barcelona followed before the player moved to Napoli in

1984, quickly establishing himself as the team's talisman. He then hit the best form of his career, inspiring Argentina's World Cup triumph in Mexico '86, which included the infamous Quarter Final against England that he won, shall we say, singlehandedly. He then returned to Italy to lead Napoli to their first ever Scudetto: it was the first time a team from Southern Italy had taken the Serie A Championship and to cap it all, they also won the Coppa Italia. Maradona was a folk hero and the most talented player on the planet. A sad descent into drug-addiction followed and although Maradona is now an obese, pathetic shadow of his former self, there is still no one in the world of football who would have equalled the tiny genius at his prime. ■

2nd

PELE

■ Sport: Football ■ Nationality: Brazilian ■ Age: 61
■ Career honours: World Cup winner, 1958, 62, 70; World Club Championship winner 1962, 63 (Santos); South American Player of the Year, 1973.

Arguably football reached its creative peak in 1970, through the sublime, seemingly effortless genius of a single team. The Brazilian World Cup squad. At its heart was Pele, a profoundly gifted centre forward. Blessed with sublime skill, stunning ball control, a powerful shot and the ability to leap above defenders like some kind of samba footballing salmon. He was already a major name before 1970, having burst onto the international scene in the 1958 World Cup finals, putting a hat-trick past France in the semi and two against Sweden in the final. He played only small roles in the following two World Cups, hacked to pieces by panicking defenders. But in 1970, with the likes of Jairzinho and Carlos Alberto at his side, he was unstoppable (apart from that incredible Gordon Banks save). Pele retired from international football shortly after Mexico, but continued to play for his club team Santos until 1974. He also played for the New York Cosmos for two seasons before finally bowing out in 1977 having scored over 1,280 goals in professional football, including 12 World Cup strikes. Now the international face of football, dig out the World Cup videos (and *Escape To Victory*) to see just how amazing this man was. ■

AS SEEN IN...



Pro Evolution Soccer

By winning the South American cup with Argentina and Brazil, you unlock classic teams from the two countries which include Maradona and Pele. Okay, their names are jumbled up but you'll certainly recognise their appearance as well as the staggering ability they possess - dribbling and shooting better than any other players in *Pro Evo*.

1st

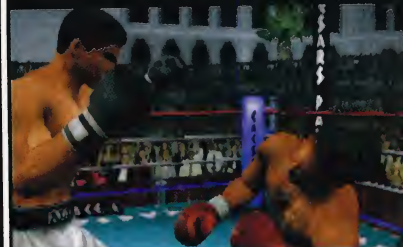
MUHAMMAD

ALI

■ Sport: Boxing ■ Nationality: American ■ Age: 60
■ Career honours: Olympic Gold Medal, 1960; World Heavyweight Champion 1964, 74, 78.

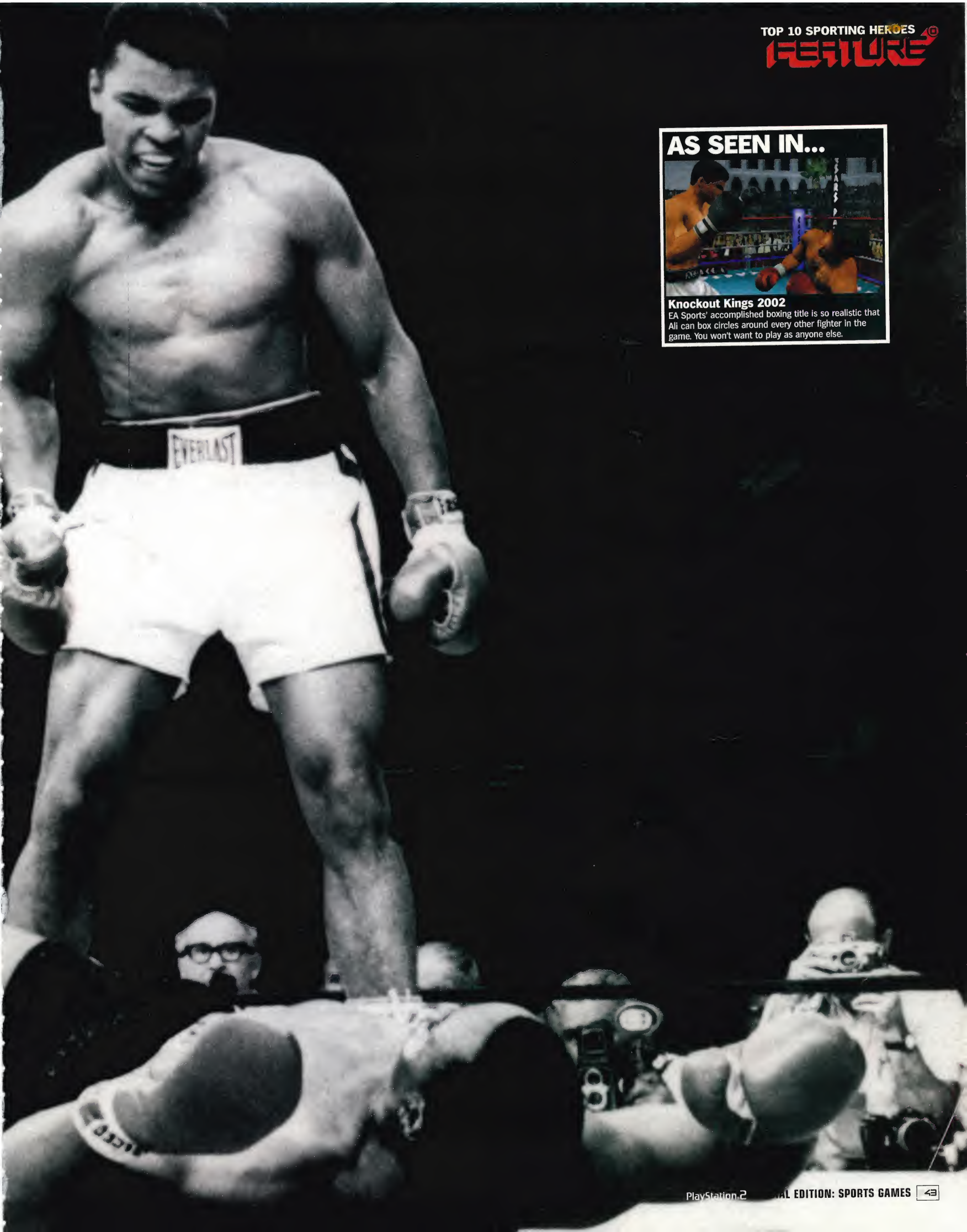
"I am the greatest!" he said time and time again. And if they didn't believe him at the beginning of his professional career in 1960, they certainly did when he reached the end twenty one years later, having clocked up a tally of 56 wins to five losses (and three of those were in the last three years of his career when he shouldn't have been fighting anyway). Ali was a graceful, powerful, intelligent fighter, but there was always more to him than boxing. In 1964, he converted to Islam after gaining his first world title and two years later he refused to be drafted into the army to fight in Vietnam with the legendary statement: "I ain't got no quarrel with those Viet Cong." Ali was charged with draft dodging, fined \$10,000 and sentenced to five years in jail, which he avoided. He was also stripped of his world title, which he eventually won back on October 30 1974, knocking out George Foreman in the 8th round of the historic 'Rumble in the Jungle' duel in Zaire. The following year saw another breathtaking encounter – the Thrilla in Manila, a bloody third clash between Ali and his arch-rival Joe Frazier. These were defining moments in boxing; epic, superhero struggles with not a bitten ear in sight. Through his talent, lyrical wit and strength of character, Ali transcended sport to help change the political landscape of America. Now afflicted with Parkinson's Disease – no doubt brought on by too many punches taken in needless fights at the end of his career – Ali's legend as both the greatest ever sportsman, and one of the most iconic figures of the 20th Century, is assured. ■

AS SEEN IN...



Knockout Kings 2002

EA Sports' accomplished boxing title is so realistic that Ali can box circles around every other fighter in the game. You won't want to play as anyone else.





EXTREME SPORTS

Seven kiddy punk, baggy short games from the sporting sub-genre of the moment.

P 44 SSX TRICKY

EA's uncharacteristically groovy snowboarder, with cool characters and tricks so mad they should be sectioned.

P 48 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

The one and only Hawkster nose-grinds his way to PS2 with another instalment in the legendary skate sim.

P 50 SLED STORM

SSX-style arcade snow sled racing with maniac tricks mixed with super fast racing.

P 51 SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

A straight-faced, officially endorsed snowboard-'em-up attempting to encroach on SSX territory.

P 52 DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

Decent attempt at a Tony Hawk's style BMX sim with lots of great new tricks.

P 53 SPLASHDOWN

Widely acclaimed as 'the better of the two Jet Ski sims'

P 53 JET SKI RIDERS

The other one.

P 54 EXTREME TEAM

Tony Hawk, Mat Hoffman and other extreme sport overlords talk about their trick-stylin' lives.

WITH EXPERT ANALYSIS BY...

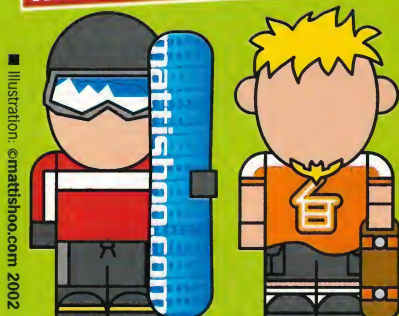


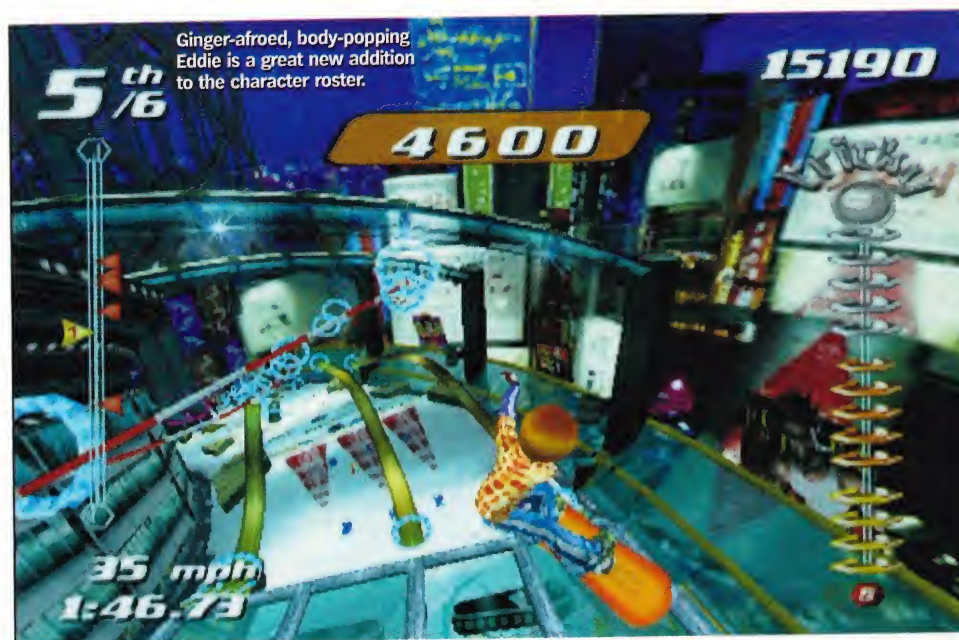
Illustration: ematishoo.com 2002

Zak 'The Snowman' Palmer
Zen-like extreme sports guru.

Bo Dacious
Dim LA skater. Skipped school to hang-out at the half-pipe.

So, who would you rather 'freestyle' with?





Ginger-afroed, body-popping Eddie is a great new addition to the character roster.



The Tokyo Megaplex course has been completely revamped.



Showoff runs should be tailored to the position of snowflakes for multipliers.



"I don't know how, but EA's Shaolin game ninjas have made SSX an even deeper experience. This isn't a full sequel, it's a re-think with new tracks, tricks and stuff. But this is pure snow nirvana, man. I am truly enlightened."

SSX TRICKY



Did you feel that EA Sports BIG's awesome snowboarding showboater just wasn't tricky enough? Fear not, because here comes its even trickier half-brother. It's stunt-ageddon!

Publisher: EA Sports BIG Developer: EA Sports (Canada)
 Price: £39.99 Players: 1-2 Out: Now

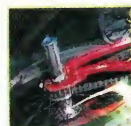
One of the fundamental functions for a videogame is to put the player in a situation that we'd never ordinarily expect to be in – playing for England against Germany in *Pro Evolution Soccer*, for example – or to sample the thrill of something which, back in harsh reality, we wouldn't (or couldn't) do even if a cocked gun was pointing at our heads. Stunt snowboarding is one such activity. And *SSX Tricky* offers bone-crunching excitement in spades.

The original *SSX* was a sleeper smash amid a clutch of underwhelming launch titles. High-speed racing and irresponsible trick-based showboating were united in one graphically lavish package. It was fresh, exhilarating and gloriously realised. *SSX* was a startlingly original title which subverted the perception that EA Sports is entirely reliant on sequels. However, when news of an update first emerged, a cynical sigh was difficult to suppress. We needn't have worried. *SSX*'s soul has survived. For fans, it's packed with loads of new tricks, physics and features, while newcomers are in for a wild ride.

SSX's premise is of an international contest held at a variety of custom-built venues around world. Most of *SSX Tricky*'s tracks are the same as in the first game, but this time they've been radically tweaked to accommodate a

more free-spirited approach (short cuts are more numerous and obvious, while tighter physics lead to wilder trickery including upside-down rail-rides).

The most progressive change to the environment design is the way the Race and Showoff versions of the same track are different; geared respectively towards either flat-out boosting or more considered grinding and flipping.



//While buddies pass with a blast of encouragement, rivals will bodycheck you from the off//

This might sound like a minor improvement, but it makes a big difference. Although the original *SSX* tracks were superbly designed, many of them didn't freely translate from racing to trick-styling; now it really is like playing two games in one.

Another positive change is in the character design and interaction. Last time around, we had the standard stereotypes: bimbo, jock, hippy-chick, Brit... Now, although we're hardly talking Dostoyevsky, there's a little more variety and depth. In addition to returning favourites Moby, Elise, Mac and JP, new 'boarders include body-popping afro-guy Eddie, slinky señorita Marisol, creepy philosophy-quoting Zen dude Brodi and Psymon the psycho. This time,

personalities have been fleshed out, complete with personal biographies, if you're interested. The much-trumpeted celebrity voice-overs (Lucy Liu, Billy Zane, Macy Gray, David Arquette) are cool, and the stars all earn their money, with each character boasting a unique repertoire of cheers, jeers, goads and taunts.

There's now a whole new dynamic based around character rivalry. As you progress through the World Circuit, all those sneaky shoves and shunts and forced wipeouts are logged and then translated into a pre-race breakdown of buddies, neutrals and rivals. While buddies pass with a blast of encouragement, rivals will be out to body-check you into the soft snow from the off. There are even post-race cut-scenes which emphasise the feuds, where Moby gets to use the words 'cack' and 'bollocks'. It's so naughty! Shame Jurgen hasn't survived for a fruity Brit-German square-off.

To reassure any *SSX* diehards fearing the worst, the basic essence of the game has barely changed. The action is still fixed around a cycle of 'tricks equals boost equals better tricks equals more boost'. After honing your skills in Practice mode, the main single-player game means taking a Novice character through the two

ONCE IT WAS ALL FIELDS ROUND HERE...

One year on, and you'll notice that building work on the old World Circuit tracks has greatly improved the SSX experience. Here are the most significant changes.



1. Snowdream

The astonishing leaps across the main run towards the end of the course have been rendered even more spectacular, with giant inflatable snowmen to burst if you sail far enough.



2. Elysium Alps

The irritating sheets of glass in the half-pipe towards the end are now lowered, with gaps in the obstacles making them much less of a pain to negotiate.



3. Mesablanca

The old railway track now begins earlier and winds its way overhead before dipping deep underground, providing ample opportunity for grind combos.



4. Mercury City Meltdown

Improvements are subtle on this urban chase, but there's a cool dash through an effluent pipe added near the end. Try for a loop the loop.



5. Tokyo Megaplex

The original game's weakest course has had a massive overhaul: a complex network of flumes and rails now crisscross the main run, adding more variety. Arigato!



6. Aloha Ice Jam

Newly added to the Showoff circuit, opportunities for big air are rare here, so make the most of a lengthy rail-slide all the way to the finish line.



You really haven't experienced 'big air' until you've played SSX Tricky.



It's tricky to rock a rhyme... when there are huge brown splodges on the screen.



"It's Moby baby, yeah!" Bursting those snowflakes with SSX's loudmouthed Brit bruiser.

10 mph
0:38.87

branches of World Circuit mode: Race and Showoff. You open up new tracks and get a chance to beef up those stats by placing first, second or third in Race mode and by achieving medal-winning point scores in Showoff.

The balance is perfect – as you and your rider's skill improves, the game unlocks trickier tracks and tougher

multiple mini-humps and a final leap into a heart-stopping void that leads to the biggest of big air.

The developer has also tinkered with the trick system, transforming the game into a festival of multi-trickery. The word 'Tricky' is now spelt out at the top of the boost meter. Pull off enough stunts to max-out the meter, and Run DMC

will kindly inform you that, "It's tricky to rock a rhyme... that's right on time... IT'S TRICKY!" You'll now have 20 seconds to perform an air-hungry über-trick by timing a grab

with a tweak of Ⓢ. Your boarder now does something utterly unfeasible and a letter of 'Tricky' turns red – you're then invited to try a different über-trick. Succeed in the tough task of lighting in all six letters before the end of a run and you're rewarded with infinite maximum boost (not affected by wipeouts) and, possibly, the capacity to pull off the much-rumoured super-über trick. Infinite boost gives you a massive advantage. In races, if you feel like taking the risk of so much tricking around during a speed run; when über-tricks are combined with spins and standard tricks, the capacity for gigantic point-scoring in Showoff mode is huge.

SNOW DOUBT

Niggles are minor. Even picky frame rate freaks will find little to grumble about – despite the extra detail and more complex content, there are far fewer incidents of slowdown here than in the original game. Control-wise, it'd be useful to be able to cancel tricks which start to look doomed, in



Pull off enough Über Tricks and you get a maximum boost.

the way moves can be cancelled or changed in some of the later *Street Fighter* games, but there's not much more you can criticise about such an intuitive and rewarding trick system.

SSX Tricky is too heavily based on the original to be classed as a stand-alone sequel, and, to be fair to EA, it's never really touted the game as such. But while it may be SSX 1.5, the developer has taken an instant classic and polished it in practically every area, managing to achieve the near-impossible task of pleasing both fans and PS2 newcomers alike. Über, indeed. ■ Andy Lowe

//Achieves the near-impossible task of pleasing both fans and PS2 newcomers alike//

Showoff challenges. As well as the overhauled original SSX venues, there are two new runs: Garibaldi, a steep, downhill track with plenty of big air for beginners to practice tricks; and at the other end of the scale, Alaska, an insanely difficult blend of vertical ice-walls, moguls, blind curves,



Brand new tricks prompt all kinds of contortions from the riders.

SSX TRICKY

Why we'd buy it:
- Frighteningly addictive
- Rewarding challenges
- Great speed and visuals

Why we'd leave it:
- Not really a 'sequel'
- Er, Jürgen's not in it

09

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

"...the only rally game on the PS2 to include a four player mode... a feat even Gran Turismo 3 couldn't manage..." **PS - Issue 19**

Rally

CHAMPIONSHIP™

25 of the fastest licensed rally cars in the world, racing over 33 stages, in 6 prestigious global rallies. With an amazingly realistic car damage system, real physics, actual rallying techniques and advanced weather effects, this game delivers a crash course in what rallying is all about...



PlayStation®2

May 2002

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Here's our whistle-stop tour of the nine main levels complete with quality ratings. You'll have to uncover the three hidden stages for yourselves, skate fans...



"Dude, Tony Hawk is like the overlord, of, like, skateboardsville. This game, man, this game adds new tricks new multiplayer stuff, better animation, new modes, and, like, the arenas are totally massive. Dude, I may weep with pleasure."



Foundry

It's small and holds few secrets but does allow for top grinding action and some half-pipe fun. **7/10**



Canada

Nice interactive missions, but a somewhat confusing grinding and ramp set-up. The forest bit is very Ewok chic. **8/10**



Rio

The first competition course offers some outrageous grinds and a cheeky hidden bowl. It's fun, if a little repetitive. **8/10**



Suburbia

More ramp than rail, this level also hides the fantastic 'I got a bad feeling about this grind', complete with thunder flash. **8/10**

The environments are bigger than ever before and chock-a-block with interactive scenery.



The superbly detailed animation doesn't only look far better than the PSone incarnations, it allows for much more accurate trick timing.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

The old man of the skateboard is back with a third gnarly quest into the dangerous yet heady world of trick-styling.

Publisher: **Activision** Developer: **Neversoft** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

Some folks can't be told. They see the word 'skateboarding' and switch off. It's understandable perhaps, considering the sport's cliquy image. But *Tony Hawk's* isn't about skateboarding. Not really. Sure, it takes the tools and jargon of the trade, but it primarily borrows and exaggerates the attitude of skating. This is a game about gambling, about taking a chance on landing that big trick and beating the high score, about the thrill of knowing failure will result in a scraped arse.

That's not to say skaters are alienated. In fact, they'll love *THPS3*, which resides in a fantasy world where everyday suburbs co-exist with futuristic Tokyo alleyways, each representing a skater's paradise of outrageous physics and interactive scenery. Here, gameplay rules over realism and furiously addictive levels combine with a vast array of manoeuvres to empower you as a gamer; letting you produce sublime feats of dexterity with a few twists of the wonderfully logical control system.

Naturally, the game is founded on the principles that underpinned the previous two instalments on PSOne. For initiates, there are three flavours of basic trick: grinds,

which involve scraping your board across edges such as kerbs and railings; grabs, in which you put at least one hand on the board and spin; and flips, where you kick your board into a spin of its own. All the movements are carried out by combining taps and double-taps on the D-pad with the corresponding trick button.

Tony experts will be relieved to learn they'll need some practice to become proficient, mainly because *THPS3* features far superior animation and so more accurate body positioning is now required. The game uses the familiar dynamic of score and task-based goals which unlock later levels. You still need to daisy-chain moves to generate



Questionable taste alert: you can skate while LA falls.

A grind towards the medal in the well-hard Tokyo competition.



LEVEL 5
The Airport
Lovely, pacey downhill elevator grinds and some excellent ramp action. It's also quite challenging. **9/10**



LEVEL 6
Skater Island
A game of two halves, with little linkage between the fun box area and ramps. A tad easy for the second competition. **7/10**



LEVEL 7
Los Angeles
Clearly the best level, with the fantastic earthquake and impressive scale, as well as a couple of nifty secrets. **10/10**



LEVEL 8
Tokyo
Tricky and seemingly small, Tokyo is a level that rewards exploration, particularly of the perimeter grinds. **8/10**



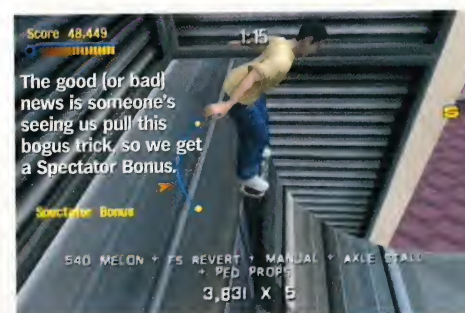
LEVEL 9
Cruise Ship
Something of a bonus, this one. Totally silly, of course, but the precarious rails and ramps provide an excellent rush. **8/10**



The all-new balance bar lets you judge lip tricks to perfection.



What the skaters lack in fashion sense they make up in skill.



The good (or bad) news is someone's seeing us pull this bogus trick so we get a Spectator Bonus.

massive combinations, and therefore massive points hauls, but there are significant changes to the gameplay that extend beyond slicker visuals and more accurate controls.

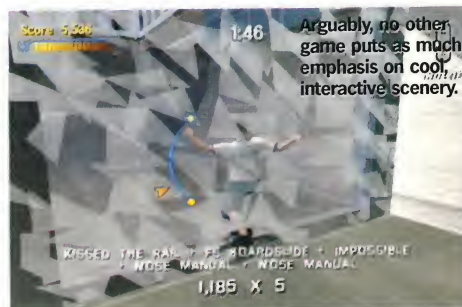
In response to public criticism, and capitalising on PS2's greater power, the arenas are now not only larger, but they're far more densely populated. When you're in the Foundry you feel as if you're mischievously interrupting the worker's daily routine, although they don't seem to care. When in LA, with its constant police chases and aimless pedestrians, you genuinely sense you're in something approximating a living environment.

Most importantly, though, by-standers have been

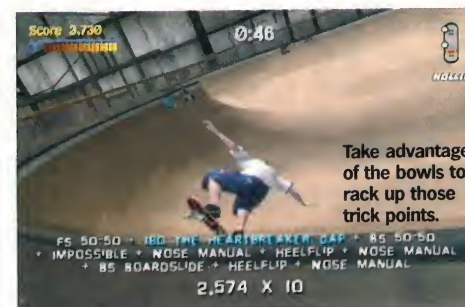
incorporated into gameplay through Spectator Bonuses (points rewards for showing off) and interactivity, for when you complete goals involving the folk around you. On the Canada level, for example, you must free local kid, Chuck, from a lamppost to which his tongue is frozen. And it isn't just people you affect – a fact most spectacularly illustrated when you cause an earthquake in LA.



//Gameplay rules over realism and addictive levels combine with a vast array of manoeuvres//



Arguably, no other game puts as much emphasis on cool, interactive scenery.



Take advantage of the bowls to rack up those trick points.

particularly to flesh out the competition levels, adding replay value for when you've netted the gold medal.

As well as the usual complement of unlockable skaters and secret levels you can also measure your success with some new stats. This allows you to vie for the longest grind in history, adding even more replay value. Furthermore, if you get all the level goals, you unlock a new slot in your trick list. And there's a raft of multiplayer options which have been extended from the usual face-offs to include games such as Slap! – in which you repeatedly ram your opponent. Add in network play and the multiplayer fun could last forever – or until *Tony Hawk's 4* at least.

Arguably, some of the arenas do fall a little below par in terms of sheer size, but when you're bored of them why not create your own in the fantastic Park Editor mode? And while a few of the new additions are commendable, they're not entirely useful – the Look command, for

instance, does little to aid your cause.

Minor criticisms aside, the excellent Create-A-Skater mode allows you to spawn a uniquely hideous creation or give Tony Hawk a comedy porn 'tache, adding yet another layer of detail. The skaters also tumble more realistically, there are tons more tricks to perform and the sound features wonderful metallic grinds and wheel rolls, giving the impression of even more realism. This is a lovingly produced sequel in every aspect.

For intuitive gameplay that you can pick up for two minutes as easily as two hours without losing interest, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* is a leading contender for the crown of Best Extreme Sports Title Ever. Honestly, you won't put this baby down for weeks... ■ Lee Hall

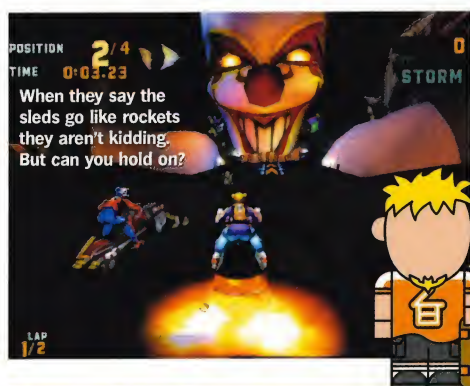
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Why we'd buy it:
• Addictive gameplay
• Many new features
• Better than SSX Tricky!

Why we'd leave it:
• It'll make all your other games look bad
• It'll ruin your social life

09

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



SLED STORM

EA BIG notches up yet another deliriously enjoyable extreme sports victory. The result? Insanity 4 – Reality 0.

Publisher: EA Sports BIG Developer: EA Canada Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2 Out: Now

Remember the days when EA Sports BIG didn't exist? Hard isn't it? Ever since the inspired snowboarding mayhem of SSX delivered the PS2's next-gen promise on day one, the gaming landscape has never been the same. Not least because it's now rammed with tortuous switchbacks, and the kind of sheer drops that used to be synonymous with instant death before they became 'trick opportunities'.



//It's a tough chore when you're astride Satan's own rocket-powered hell wagon//

Back then, before extreme really became EXTREME! EA released an enjoyable if unremarkable PSone Skidoo racer called *Sled Storm*. It was tethered to quaint old notions like realistic sled design, but nevertheless the seeds of the reality bending 'BIG' philosophy were sown.

Now *Sled Storm* has been reborn and in true evangelical style it's an all-singing, all-dancing thrill festival. The game is truer to the spirit of the SSX titles than its other 'BIG' brethren and it shows from the moment you fire

the sucker up. The front end positively reeks of attitude and, as a wave of nu-metal rattles the speakers, you're introduced to some familiar faces in the shape of SSX's Zoe 'Royale' Payne and Pysmon Stark. There are eight riders in total, including Prozac-happy munchkin Sam and the positively feline Alix Kinoshita – these are unlocked as and when you beat them on their home courses.

Sled Storm gives you Single Race options of Quick Race, Time Trial and Free Ride, and a Championship mode through which you gain access to the six main (and one bonus) tracks, enhanced sleds and new riders. There's also

Multiplayer action and a novel Rival Challenge mode that only opens up when you complete the Championship mode. This allows you to race a mate (or the CPU) for ownership of their rider's sled. Just the thing for gauntlet-flinging *Sled* champs with a swagger and a Memory Card.

The courses are designed with velocity, tricks and rule bending in mind (see Track Listing). Locations vary from the improbably volcanic Rumble Ridge to the unhinged theme park setting of Polarfest and although there are only seven tracks to unlock, their design is such that you're unlikely to feel short changed – there are so many short cuts in the game. However, with short cuts come risks and not all of



them are worth the effort required to catch them just right. Indeed, when even the short cuts have short cuts, sorting out the wheat from the chaff can be a real challenge – it's a tough chore when you're astride Satan's own rocket-powered hell wagon approaching terminal velocity midway round The Beast From The East.

TRACK LISTING

Here's a complete rundown of the seven stuntastic *Sled Storm* tracks.



1. Cedar Canyon A (relatively) easy Intro to the world of *Sled Storm* and probably the most natural environment you'll race through.



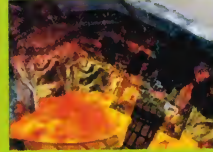
2. Bermuda Berg A track cut from glacial ice, the lack of friction is a big problem on turns. Save time with a short cut over a capsized liner.



3. Polarfest This tricky course is set in a mad winter wonderland complete with haunted house, ferris wheel and big, big top finish line.



4. Beast From The East Set in Hong Kong, this has plenty of opportunities for big air and sightseeing with some ill jumps and short cuts.



5. Rumble Ridge This Argentina-based volcanic odyssey comes with more short cuts per square metre than any other track.



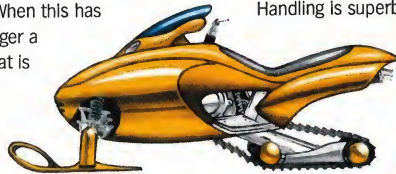
6. Twinn Peaks The peak of seat of the pants sled racing. Vertigo-inducing rises and drops, coupled with some very tricky short cuts.



7. Black Diamond Bonus track with a deceptively sedate look that reveals itself to be riddled with vicious turns and undulating terrain.

SLEDGE HAMMER

While trick-pulling is a feature here, unlike *SSX Tricky*, it's not the focus of the game. Make no mistake, this is a racer first, second and straggler. Tricks are confined to combination presses of the shoulder buttons and given the weight of sled versus board, you find out pretty quickly that one or two tricks per jump are the most you can expect to pull. But if the trick selection and opportunities aren't huge, the benefits of pulling off a 360° spin certainly are. Rack up the tricks or hit stray track-side objects and you'll fill up your 'Storm Meter'. When this has life in it you can press **Ⓢ** to trigger a scenery-blurring rocket boost that is so powerful in inexperienced hands it can prove to be as much of a handicap as it is a potential life saver.



But by far the most thrilling aspect of *Sled Storm* is the way the gameplay challenge has been tuned. This is a hard game. When you start you will part company with your sled a lot. You'll wipe out spectacularly and frequently find yourself falling from first to sixth place as you dejectedly kick-start your Kinoshita SG Type R back to life. Frustrating? You bet. However, even when that does happen you are never placed so far behind the pack that you can't regain the lead. As you get more experienced you'll wipe out far less often, but by then your opponents will be smarter, too.

Handling is superbly sensitive and changing your sled's attitude midair is essential if you're going to land smoothly. There is a brake (it might as well be a beverage cup holder for all the use it'll get) and the uppermost shoulder buttons moonlight as tight cornering aids but,



Landing jumps at high speed is tricky.

after that, it's down to your instincts and lightning reactions. This is a game where skill pays and the race environments are easily as challenging as your opponents.

On the whole, the game's frame rate keeps pace with its own headlong ambitions. And animation, from clouds of exhaust-thrown slush to the riders getting buffeted by rough terrain, is executed well throughout. Add a frat rock soundtrack and a pair of amusingly unhinged commentators (one of whom is big screen mentalist Matthew 'Scream' Lillard) and *Sled Storm* is everything we've come to expect from the 'BIG' label in terms of quality, style and unfettered enjoyment.

Is it original? No. Is it a groundbreaking evolution of the extreme sports species? Again, no. But is it easily one of the finest arcade racing titles available on PS2 and worth inclusion in any race fan's collection? Bingo.

■ Paul Fitzpatrick

SLED STORM

Why we'd buy it:

- We love speed
- We want a powered racing cousin to *SSX*

Why we'd leave it:

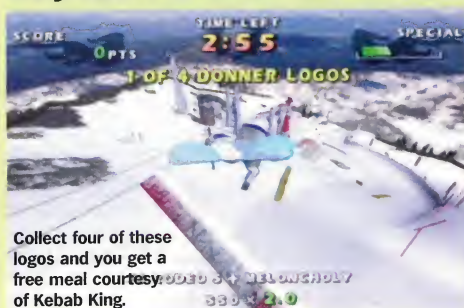
- We don't like skidoo racing
- We like pulling lots of tricks instead

08

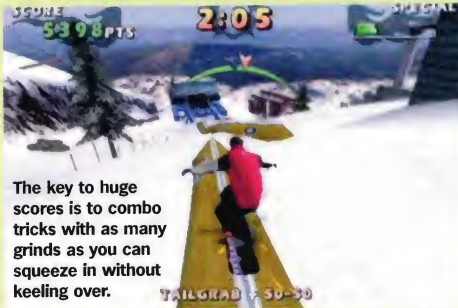
PlayStation 2 VERDICT

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

The latest in a long line of extreme sports wannabes is little more than *Tony Hawk's* in a nice warm parka.



Collect four of these logos and you get a free meal courtesy of Kebab King.



The key to huge scores is to combo tricks with as many grinds as you can squeeze in without keeling over.



"Attempting to graft skating gameplay onto a boarding sim disrespects the spirit of the mountain. Snowboarding is a mystical encounter between man and slope. At no point have I ever hit a skidoo and appeared further up the hill."

Like *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX* et al, this is a stunt-based affair.



Publisher: Activision Developer: Dear Soft Price: £44.99
Players: 1-2 Out: Now

This being part of the same 0² range of games as the acclaimed *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, the host of similarities between the two is immediately apparent. Indeed, the look, feel, structure, control system and modes are all 'borrowed' from *Tony Hawk's* titles, to the extent that this really is the Hawkster on snow.

The interface is a joy to behold and, for a stunt-based game, about as intuitive as they come; offering a near seamless combination of depth and accessibility. The core of the game, the single-player Career mode, mirrors the structure of the *Tony Hawk's* series. Each of the eight real-world locations contains a number of tasks, whether it be

achieving high scores or collecting a series of icons. When enough have been completed, you're rewarded with the unlocking of subsequent levels. It's a tried and tested formula but feels somewhat lacking in excitement, primarily because of the limitations of the piste.

Where the *THPS* games are essentially free-roaming, this is a strictly downhill affair. The linearity is alleviated somewhat by the inclusion of a number of skidoos being placed around each level – plough into them and you'll be magically conveyed further back up the slope. It's a slightly clumsy system, but it does mean if you miss something on the way down you do at least have a second chance at it.

All the basic modes you'd expect – Two-player, Freeride and Create-A-Character – are included, but it's only the two-player Push game, in which one player is forced off the screen by the vertical split moving across when tricks are

successfully landed, that really inspires.

Ultimately, *Pro Snowboarder* isn't really a winning proposition. It lacks both the speed and sheer visceral thrills when weighed against *SSX Tricky*. And it isn't a patch on the orgy of gaming goodness that is *Tony Hawk's 3*. Where the Neversoft title is hugely innovative, this is a derivative, if playable, snowboarding cousin. ■ Oliver Hurley

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

Why we'd buy it:

- Pining for the simpler times of *Cool Boarders*
- That nifty Push mode

Why we'd leave it:

- Feels rather sluggish
- *THPS3* and *SSX Tricky* are much, much better

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



The body contorts with total realism and it's all down to the skeletal structure. Pity they couldn't do something about Dave's scarily passive facial expression...



"Whoa, dude, that camera is more of a mind frig than that skunk I scored last night. It's a downer 'coz I was like, 'these tricks are awesome, man, totally fresh.' Oh, and Dave's staring eyes freak me out. He sees into my brain."



Long grinds are still key to success here.



Passing cars provide little genuine interaction.

BAILS AND BRUISES

Scraped skin and broken bones seem to pass as currency in the Pepsi Max-fuelled world of extreme sports. Key to progress is the need to win the respect of the local riders and sponsors and the only way to do that is to earn your blood-red badge of courage.



1. Pre-book that ambulance! These do or die-style stunts just leave you heading for another uncontrolled descent to earth.



2. Mr Mirra's injuries are bloodless but ball-bustingly brutal, leaving the rider sobbing into the Tarmac.



3. The realistic skeleton animations ensure that a battered body folds, falls and slips from the top of a ramp to the bottom. You can almost smell the pain.

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

The exciting world of BMX gets the *Tony Hawk's* treatment in this two-wheeled extreme sports trick-athon.

Publisher: **Acclaim** Developer: **Z-Axis** Price: **£39.99**
 Players: **1-2** Out: **Now**

Taking the solid building blocks of the PSone original, Z-Axis has fused black box power with grey playability to make *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2* the best bike-'em-up yet.

Central to this success is the retention of the innovative trick modifier system that allows stunts to be joined into new moves rather than merely chained together. This adds an element other BMX games lack: skill. Random button stabbers will find the later challenges impossible to conquer without developing the skill of a seasoned pro.



//Button stabbers will find the later challenges impossible without developing the skills of a pro//

The size of the playing areas is impressively vast. Combining the restrictive layouts of the old courses into eight huge sections has lead to a new sense of freedom. Skate parks no longer end with solid concrete walls, instead they merge into hangars, across rivers and out into the countryside. In this expansive environment the length of each run has been extended – just crossing them can take

two minutes of solid pedalling. You can quite happily play for a few hours simply by exploring and discovering the best nooks and crannies to get high trick scores.

The environments are full of interactive elements such as traffic, other BMXers and pedestrians. These serve two purposes: as trick opportunities (for which you're rewarded with points) and as a way of finding new and progressively more difficult challenges. Ride up to one of the local BMX riders and he'll give you a task such as clearing a certain ramp or performing a special trick in a designated place. Obviously, impressing the locals with your skills is a sure fire way to progress but also provides plenty of replay value.

Aside from this innovation, the game follows the now established *Tony Hawk's* method of laying down several tasks to complete, such as trick score totals, finding and destroying a number of objects and discovering certain difficult-to-reach areas. This is an effective motivator, forcing you to fully explore every level if you're to continue further.

Unfortunately, a lazy game camera causes a few problems on certain locations where a roof or overhang leaps out and obscures your view. Turning your bike too quickly also has the effect of rendering you 'blind' to what's ahead and often results in you missing a ramp or putting



you off course for a trick. The only way around this is to take time lining up certain manoeuvres which consequently interrupts any rhythm you may have built up.

Put simply, *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2* is great but flawed. Challenges are numerous, involving and well designed, arenas are vast and the stunts inventive. A few errors mar the surface details, but it would be a shame if this rollicking rider remained ignored in the face of stiff competition from *Tony Hawk's 3*. ■ **Alex Cooke**

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

Why we'd buy it:
 - Inventive array of tricks
 - Numerous and varied challenges

Why we'd leave it:
 - That nonchalant camera
 - The occasional collision error

07

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



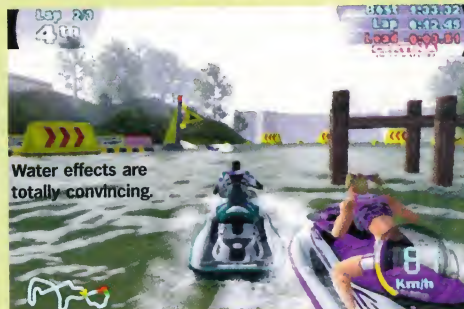
"Uergh, I'm, like, totally seasick. That wave motion is far out. But some of the levels are bogus. Germany? Man, who wants to go to Germany? Dude, where the hell is Germany? Is it, like, in Paris? Their rivers suck, man!"

SPLASHDOWN

Rainbow Studios has created some of the best water effects ever for its Sea-Doo racer. But is there a game in there somewhere, lurking beneath the rippling surface?



The dreary German river level features some bizarrely placed buildings.



Water effects are totally convincing.



Two-player mode on the trick-friendly indoor level can get quite competitive.

Publisher: **Infogrames** Developer: **Rainbow Studios** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-2** Out: **Now**

Woah! New gaming experience. It actually feels like your craft is buoyant. You bob up and down with the same dynamics as you would when floating in real life. The handling of this Sea-Doo-er-up is directly affected by waves and wake causing you to lose balance or speed and forcing you to adjust direction. This makes it necessary to 'work' the Sea-Doo round courses rather than simply apply gas and steer. This is *Splashdown*.

These fantastic water effect help disguise, at least for a while, gameplay that quickly become monotonous. Because a three lap qualification is necessary before each race (which is also three laps), you can often do the same track up to 12 times before progressing to a new location. And sadly, the courses are nothing to write home about.

Water doesn't make a game in itself – you need something to race through or around. Highlights include Maui and an Australian coral reef. In these locations, the whole experience adds up: Clear blue sky, palm trees and that fluorescent aquamarine sea that normally only exists in picture postcards of some exotic isle. The depth of the water is carefully considered, alternating between the sandy shallows and the darker and deeper areas where rocks and weed lie. The fact the waves defy laws of science and roll at right angles to the shore is forgivable – you'll be too ensconced in the lushness of it all to care.

Compare this to a muddy and featureless German river in the rain and you'll see where the designers' imaginations ran dry. When there is no sense of depth to the water the effect is somewhat diluted and the game loses impact. It rapidly becomes a case of accelerate, slow down, jump a ramp, land, finish. The buildings, trees, docks and boats you pass appear to have just been randomly dumped there by a

bored town planner.

Splashdown, lacking the imaginative excesses of, say, *SSX*, offers little more than a racing game on water. It has achieved an aim – to turn lines of computer code into water and set a standard to follow. Yet somehow Rainbow Studios has failed to complete the equation and add the gaming element that would have made *Splashdown* a roaring deluge. As it stands it's more of a slightly dangerous stream. ■ **George Walter**

SPLASHDOWN

Why we'd buy it:
- To experience the water
- It's the PS2's best water-based racer

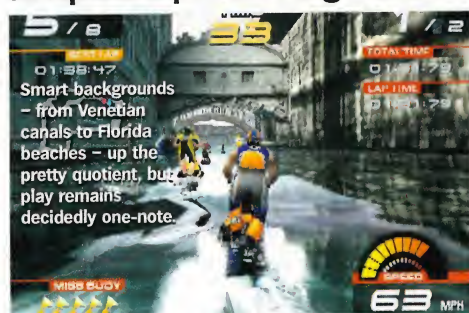
Why we'd leave it:
- Uninspiring gaming
- Monotonous tracks
- Odd AI

07

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**

JET SKI RIDERS

More pleasant water effects; more unlikely city-based river courses; more adequate aquatic racing. Has the Jet Ski bubble burst?



Smart backgrounds – from Venetian canals to Florida beaches – up the pretty quotient, but play remains decidedly one-note.



Dodgy surf graphics detract from the watery effects.



And rather than stare at a Lycra arse some more, here's a replay shot!

Publisher: **Eidos** Developer: **Opus** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-2** Out: **Now**

Jet Ski racing is the new motocross. Motocross has undulating tracks that place demands on the dexterity of the rider. Same here. Of course, unlike motocross, the tracks in *Jet Ski Riders* aren't fashioned from immovable filth and dirt, but constantly shifting water.

Ever since Nintendo's genre-defining N64 game *Wave Race*, some five years ago, developers have struggled to recreate the complex ebb and flow of realistic water. *Splashdown* now seems to have tamed the fluid beast and *Jet Ski Riders* follows suit; the clever reflections and the feeling of riding on choppy waters making up for the crude surf. Sadly, as with *Splashdown*, it's the unimaginative game

structure which lets the title down.

Jet Ski Riders boasts the old Arcade and Championship modes, a Freestyle trick option and requisite Two-player mode. Players speed around courses, delineated by buoys which have to be passed by correctly on either their left or right sides. Speed past on the wrong side, and your engine cuts out for a second. Choice of courses is limited but each one does offer a unique challenge. There are the relatively calm but narrow canals of Venice, the storm-lashed coves of Thailand and the rolling surf of Florida to have fun with. As you ascend through the Championship mode, you'll return to the courses more than once, often at different times of day, or in increasingly adverse weather conditions.

As you might expect, the courses are littered with short cuts, ramps and alternative routes. Frequently, however, the most obvious route is the quickest, so while it may be cool

to leap over that luxury yacht, flicking v-signs at the over-privileged on-deck, you're usually better off playing it safe.

Of course, the most important thing with any *Jet Ski* game is the physics. Does it feel like you're mounting those waves, battling against the surf? Well... not really. It's too jerky and simplistic. And the sit-down *Jet Ski* model handles like a broken pedalo. ■ **Paul Rose**

JET SKI RIDERS

Why we'd buy it:
- Decent water effects
- Good variety of courses
- Instant fun

Why we'd leave it:
- Basic handling
- Because we've already bought *Splashdown*

06

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



WORDS: SAM RICHARDS

EXTREME



Skateboarding legend Tony Hawk demonstrates just why his name adorns the most popular extreme sports videogame series ever.

GO TO

Top Ten Sporting Heroes
Find out if any extreme heroes make it into our rundown of the greatest sporting icons ever.

PAGE 34



Will Kelly Slater's game be better than the terrible H30 Surfing? We can only hope.



"I can see the pub from 'ere!" Mat Hoffman gives it some very big air.

TEAM

How many extreme sports legends can you cram into one room? OPS2 managed five: skater Tony Hawk, BMX rider Mat Hoffman, snowboarder Shaun Palmer, surfer Kelly Slater and wakeboarder Shaun Murray. The connection? They're all fronting PS2 games under Activision's O² brand.

It's role reversal time at LA's E3 show. Out on Activision's specially-erected half-pipe, members of Neversoft's Tony Hawk's Pro Skater development team are manfully attempting to recreate their digital exploits in physical form as a sizeable crowd whoops its encouragement. Meanwhile, inside a tiny press room, the world's most famous skateboarder is demoing the latest version of his top-selling videogame.

"If you make the first four grinds you trigger an earthquake," reveals Tony Hawk (for it is he). OPS2 makes two grinds before falling flat on its arse. The joystick is passed to Mat Hoffman who, with an intense look of concentration on his face, immediately wedges the crotch of his on-screen skater on a railing. The man who's endured more painful scrapes on his BMX than he's eaten hot dinners winces in sympathetic pain. He knows how it feels.

It's left to the O² posse's newest recruit, Shaun Murray, to show us how it's done. Shaun M is a big name in wakeboarding, which is a bit like water skiing on a snowboard. He's also been playing Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 all morning and racks up an impressive end-of-level score. Impossibly talented surfer Kelly Slater whoops and applauds. Meanwhile, the man USA Today called the World's Greatest Athlete – aka heavily-tattooed snowboarder Shaun Palmer – appears to be shaking off a particularly menacing hangover in the corner. The meeting of the most renowned extreme sportsmen on the planet is now in session.

OPS2: Do you all play each others' games? If so, who's the best?

Kelly: I think that comes down to who's the laziest and who spends more time indoors on their butt.

Tony: Shaun [Murray] is getting pretty good at my game...

Shaun M: It's the first time I got to play it here so I'm trying out all the new levels.

Mat: Palmer and I are fighting for last place. I'm playing Tony's new one at the moment and I basically suck.

Kelly: [charitably] Mat might be really good at my game but we don't know yet because it isn't available. Maybe we'll put in an Extra Easy mode so he can play it.

OPS2: After playing Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, do you think the rest of you will be able to cut it on the vert ramp?

Shaun P: I used to skate when I was younger and I do all kinds of other sports besides



TONY HAWK

Sport: Skateboarding

Age: 32

Needs no introduction. Started competing in 1978 and has won more titles than it's possible to list here. Perhaps best known for being the first skater to pull a 900° in competition, Tony has now semi-retired. He's the reason why we're all here, folks.

Games: Tony Hawk's Skateboarding, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (PSone), Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (PS2).



// "I'm playing Tony's new one and I basically suck" //
Mat Hoffman

snowboarding so I reckon I could get out there on the half-pipe... [Shaun modestly doesn't mention his successes in the fields of motocross, mountain biking or skiing].

Kelly: Palmer's going to come out with, like, Shaun Palmer's Pro Everything.

OPS2: How well did you know each other

before the O² brand roster took shape?

Tony: Myself and Mat have done a lot of events together in the past so it's not like [adopts sarcastic syrupy tone] 'Videogames brought us together!'

OPS2: But since yours was the first game, Tony, did Activision go to you for advice on who to approach to front the other O² titles?

Tony: A little bit, yeah. I thought Mat was the obvious choice for a BMX game and the other guys kinda suggested themselves, but it's amazing that we actually got them all together on the same programme.

OPS2: Do you think that the games have played any part in popularising your sport?

Tony: I think the success of my game shows how much effort and devotion Neversoft has put in. They just wanted to make the game seem real... and, yeah, I think people have got a hankering to go skating because of playing the game, which I never thought would be the case. I just thought it would be for hardcore skaters.

OPS2: So does that mean you get people coming up to you at events like this who previously wouldn't have known anything about skateboarding or extreme sports?

Tony: Yeah, for sure.

Mat: It's cool that Tony's game has been able to capture the core market. I've heard skaters say something like 'When I'm older and I can't physically skate and I'm worried about injuring myself, I'm just gonna retire and play Tony's game'. They've said there's either stuff in the game that they'll never be able to do, or that they would never try because they'd hurt themselves too bad.



Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2, skidding onto PS2 soon.



But then the game has also captured the imagination of people who have never even skated before.

Tony: Now when you go out skating, everyone knows what a crooked grind is or whatever. That never happened before, you'd have a handful of people that understood all the lingo and all the technical aspects of skating, and now it's like, everyone knows! And everyone knows how hard these tricks are too.



MAT HOFFMAN

Sport: BMX

Age: 29

The youngest ever Bicycle Freestyle pro aged 16, Mat had totally redefined the discipline of BMX vert by the time he was 20 years-old. Ten world titles (and 14 operations!) behind him, Mat has more recently turned his attentions to base-jumping off 3,500 foot Norwegian fjords.

Games: Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX (PSone), Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 (coming on PS2).



// 'Can you do a front-foot impossible to crooked grind to shove-it to manual?' No//

Kelly: That's because the difficulty actually relates to the score.

Mat: Yeah, although some people have got a skewed version of that, so they're like, 'Can you do this crazy handstand?'

Tony: True. I get that all the time [mimics whiney fan voice] 'Can you do a front-foot impossible to crooked grind to shove-it to manual?' No. I'm just gonna go up and down for a bit.

OPS2: Do you feel you need to keep inventing new tricks and moves to remain at the forefront of your sports?

Kelly: I don't know how skaters remember all that shit! Don't you go for two or three months and then think, 'Oh yeah, forgot about that one?'

Shaun M: But the individuality for those guys is just in the little variations...

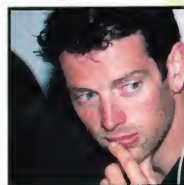
Tony: Well you do get a trick set and run that out for a while - you have to have a basic routine. But what people love about skating is that it's evolving all the time. Sure, it's hard right now, because if you want to invent something new it's got to be super dangerous or super technical...

Mat: ... that lasts three-quarters of a second.

Tony: Right.

OPS2: So what's the primary motivating factor for continual innovation within your sports?

Mat: I wouldn't want to feel like I'm living off past glories.



SHAUN PALMER

Sport: Snowboarding (among others)

Age: 32

An amazingly versatile athlete, Shaun has bagged numerous X-Games golds for both boardercross and half-pipe events since turning pro in 1985. Also competes at world class level in mountain biking, downhill skiing, motocross and snowmobiling.

Games: Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder (PS2).



Five guys named O² (clockwise from top left): Tony Hawk, Shaun Palmer, Kelly Slater, Shaun Murray, Mat Hoffman.

Shaun P: I just get bored of my old tricks so I have to come up with something new.

Tony: I don't think I could justify being a pro if I came up with the same old tricks all the time.

OPS2: How do you go about inventing new moves?

Mat: I go back to some of my old tricks and start pushing it, adding new twists and seeing what comes off.

Kelly: It's wholly by accident. Like I'll try a flip and for some reason I can't land it right, so I'll add in a double spin and just hold on to it for longer and suddenly it's like, 'Woah, I didn't think about that before'.

OPS2: How much do you think about the risks involved in pushing yourselves that little bit harder in order to discover new tricks?

Kelly: It's the risk that drives us.

Mat: That's the whole point - you don't know whether a trick is possible or not. It's the attraction of the unknown.

Kelly: You do learn how to fall. You learn how to bail out so the fall doesn't hurt you so much. I can do you a video in the art of wiping out! But you've got to put yourself on the edge of that threshold.

OPS2: So who can boast the worst injuries?

Shaun P: I hurt my pinkie. [Mock solemnly holds up a bandaged little finger.]

Mat: I stubbed my toe...

Kelly: He's not telling you the worst of it. Once, Mat actually died.

Mat: I'm trying to break every bone in my body.

OPS2: Have injuries ever made you consider giving up your sport?

Mat: There are times when the pain outweighs the pleasure...

Kelly: I go through phases. Every winter I go surfing in Hawaii. All year you work up to these big waves so you're psyched to go push yourself. Even if you get hurt you're still riding off the buzz so it doesn't seem as bad.

OPS2: How do you motivate yourselves to take the kind of physical risks in pursuit of your sports that most normal people would never even consider?

Mat: You don't really think of it as one big thing. It's like you just push a little further on what you did last time, and push a little further, and next thing you know you've done a 900°.

Tony: You get to the point when you've done everything out there, so you need to try



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 – setting the standard for every other extreme sports game in development.



Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder, developed by snowboard game specialists UEP Systems.



something new.

OPS2: Can you describe the feeling of being 30 feet in the air, midway through a huge trick or jump?

Mat: It's a kind of... chaos. Except you've gotta concentrate otherwise it's gonna be a painful ending. So it's like trying to control something that's out of control.

OPS2: After all, physics never meant for you to be up there...

Kelly: Why not? I'd rather be there than, like, playing paintball with five guys hunting me down! [It transpires that the guys spent most of the day before shooting each other with Dulux pellets]

Mat: Man, I got nailed from all sides. I had some big old bruises come today.

Kelly: It's easier when your only enemy is you yourself.

Shaun M: Yeah, you don't have that feeling of letting someone else down.

OPS2: So do you feel that your sports are quite solitary pursuits?

Tony: Yeah, there's been a load of times when it's just me and the board.

Mat: It's good to ride with other guys and trade moves and stuff, but most of the time you're on your own.

OPS2: Did you ever try out for less extreme sports like football and baseball?

Tony: I remember my Dad dragging me out of the skate park and taking me along to basketball practice with all my pads on and I just thought, I don't wanna be here.

Kelly: My Dad was a football coach – we had, like, a clash of personalities...

OPS2: Did you feel like rebel athletes because you were opting out of prescribed school sports to go skating or surfing or whatever?

Tony: I just preferred the community of the skate park to the school sports teams because it didn't



KELLY SLATER

Sport: Surfing

Age: 29

After entering his first contest aged eight, winning six world titles and becoming acclaimed as the best surfer of his generation, Kelly actually retired from competition over a year ago, although he still surfs showcase events and may yet return to the arena. Kelly also finds time to play guitar in a surfers' all-star band.

Games: Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer (coming on PS2).



SHAUN MURRAY

Sport: Wakeboarding

Age: 25

Started waterskiing age eight, switched to wakeboarding in his teens and is now into his sixth year as a pro. He's won the world championship and just about every other wakeboarding title although the X-Games gold medal still eludes him [he finished second again last year]. New boy of the O' team.

Games: Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder (coming on PS2).

come with a big set of rules.

Kelly: It was always a separate thing for me. I had my school life, and I had my surfing life.

Shaun P: "I was a f**k-up at school!"

OPS2: Is there still a rebel culture behind your sports or are they just another part of the mainstream now?

Tony: There's still that rebel aspect to it, but skating's becoming way more accepted now.

OPS2: Is being mainstream a good thing?

Mat: Well you don't have to worry about people looking down on you or having to struggle to make a living out of sports. Of course, there's always a hardcore who want to keep it underground...

Kelly: It's cool that we can all be held up as role models. I mean, rebel surfers are fine but you don't see them in the championships because I think they spend half their energy being rebellious.

Shaun M: Some people would think not working in an office for a living and having the freedom to do what you want is rebellious.

OPS2: Have any of you ever had to work nine-to-five jobs?

Shaun P: I think I lasted a day...

Kelly: I worked for five days and that drove me nuts.

Kelly: Some people's jobs might be what they love but whatever it is there's not much freedom in a nine-to-five.

OPS2: Without being rude, some of you are getting on a bit these days. How long can you continue taking risks for your sport?

Tony: I don't know. I guess I've already stopped trying all the dangerous stuff because there's too much to lose, so I've been concentrating on technique. I don't have a long-term plan, but sure, I can't keep doing this forever.

Mat: It's nice for me because I'm kind of immortal in the world of BMX vert, even if I stop tomorrow. My body will tell me when it's had enough.

Kelly: I'm just hoping my game's going to be great and everyone loves it and it sells millions of copies. Then I can retire for good. ■



MOTOR SPORTS

Get your motor running with the best sports-based racing sims on PS2.

P 58 FORMULA ONE 2001

Sony's homegrown F1 sim. So realistic, you'll get Ferrari ringing you up telling you to let Schumacher win.

P 60 WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Get your mud flaps on and prepare for dirt in SCE's exhilaratingly authentic rally-em-up.

P 62 LE MANS 24 HOURS

Fun translation of the gruelling motor car endurance test, featuring a genuine 24 hour mode. Madness!

P 63 MOTO GP 2

Namco re-animates its superbike racing franchise with another flashy piece of two-wheeled speed cake.

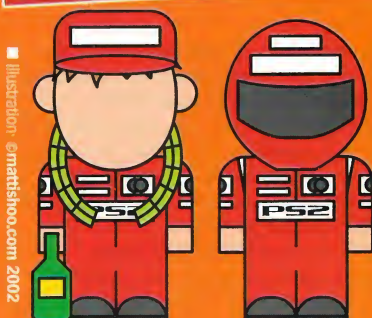
P 64 MX 2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

Flying dirt bike fun for all, featuring Ricky Carmichael [Who could be a dwarf porn star for all we know].

P 64 ATV OFFROAD

As above but with quad bikes, hilariously low-gravity, and definitely no dwarf porn star.

WITH EXPERT ANALYSIS BY...



Stirling Mess

British gentleman racer. Posh, dim and typically hapless at driving.

Paddy Ooervine

Irish playboy. Loves his chicks like his vehicles: fast and easy to handle.



FORMULA ONE 2001

All the stats, all the drivers, all the circuits and all the options you'd expect from an officially licensed F1 thrill-fest.



Rear view mirrors come in very handy for spotting approaching rivals on your tail.



Detailed cars make a world of difference to the gameplay. Hell, just watching the things can be cool.

Publisher: SCE Developer: Studio Liverpool Price: £19.99
Players: 1-16 Out: Now

The trouble with F1 games is the way the all-out racing buzz is normally secondary to a test of consistency and endurance. In the real world, there's a certain jolt in tracing the glitzy soap-opera of a bunch of tightly sponsored, well-bred men and their magnificent machines, which, occasionally, they get to have a race with. Sadly, F1 is such a long-term discipline, it's incredibly difficult to translate into much of a gaming dynamic beyond the standard driving game. And since the actual driving bit is more of a marathon than a sprint, there has to be a strong emphasis on innovation to keep the low-level F1 nerds hooked, punishing those corners lap after lap.

For F1 2001 though, the angle is slickness and variety, with pretty much every aspect of the sport represented and the authenticity cranked up so high it would take the most churlish chassis-jockey to spot any lapses in translation. All of the professional drivers are 'officially' represented: from icy Mike Schumacher to steady Eddie Irvine and, of course, numerous Scandinavians with overbalanced consonant-vowel surname ratios.

The broad sweep of gameplay options offers multiple entry-points, based on developing skill and familiarity. Test Drive is the usual no-frills sampler; a low-stakes, one-off romp around any course, with any driver. Quick Race is the same, with added competition. There's also a cute Spectator option, featuring a computer race of which you are the 'director', with the potential to mix and match camera angles to create your own fantasy Grand Prix.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF F1 GAMING

Lining up on the grid are five formula one racers that rocked the videogame world.



1980: MONACO GP
(Sega, Coin-op)
Overhead-view vertical-scroller with surprisingly good sound and – guaranteed to cause palpitations at the time – a steering wheel!



1982: POLE POSITION
(Atari, Coin-op)
First major 3D driving game. Fuzzy voice urged: "Prepare to qualify!" Posher arcades boasted a supremely cosy sit-down booth version.



1988: SUPER MONACO GP
(Sega, Coin-op)
Getting much more sophisticated now. Sit-down cabinet, steering-wheel, pedals, and (first signs of authenticity) a reasonable copy of the Monaco GP course.



1992: VIRTUA RACING
(Sega, Coin-op)
A huge step-up in graphics/3D technology and, with its multi-play marquee cabinet, the beginnings of an attempt to inject arcades with a more social atmosphere.



2001: FORMULA ONE 2001 (PS2)
With the arcades now packed with fishing/skiing/guitar-playing simulations, the F1 game comes home: with official licence, steering wheel and a unique internet lap-time tournament.



But the game only really begins to crackle in Championship mode, with an extensive – a really, really extensive – recreation of an entire (2001) season. After selecting a team/driver, it's straight into the race weekend, with the option of taking several practice sessions (mainly to experiment with the car set up) before a timed qualifying run, followed by a warm-up and, finally, the race.

This is where it gets serious: blue, yellow and black flags, time penalties, strategic pit stops, audacious overtaking. As with most other aspects of the game, pit stop strategy can be customised before the race, with the pit crew advising, via radio contact, when and where to pull in. Of course, you can ignore them but on longer tracks pushing the car to the limit will inevitably cost championship points.

Everything looks and moves fine, with a solid, fog and pop-up-free depth to the zippy 3D. Still, only a hardcore masochist would think of turning off the driver's aids. It's clear, but not that clear, and without those crucial bendy arrows telegraphing tight corners you'll be taking several unscheduled sightseeing trips across sludge and gravel. Control is sharp, although on anything other than cockpit view mode, the driving illusion wobbles slightly – with the cars appearing to turn on a bizarre, floating central axis.

As ever, analogue control is best, and there's the Speedster 2 steering-wheel option which works extremely well. The competent two-player split-screen mode throws up the intriguing possibility of recreating a rudimentary arcade atmosphere by bolting two Speedster wheels side by side to a sturdy table and turning off the lights. And then hiring a surly man to smoke gratuitously in the corner.

Despite being the heart of the game, Championship mode can prove immensely trying to all but the most hardened F1 maniac, given the sheer lengths of race time and distance involved. Gaining a comfortable lead can

turn out to be a double-edged advantage, as, for the reasonably steady driver, it can mean enduring lap after lap of featureless track scenery with only the odd grassy rumble and a pit stop to break the tedium. Luckily, the designers have included an excellent Memory Card career-saving option, which meticulously saves a driver's progress throughout a championship, comparing results to previous racers via three skill levels. So, although sessions can be lengthy and even samey, at least there's the comfort of being able to break things up with the Memory Card.



//The game really begins to crackle in Championship mode with its extensive recreation of the season//

There's also a superb, saveable replay system with the option of re-examining sections of the race with more than one replay visible at a time, should you feel the need.

FOOT TO THE FLOOR

The problem with all of this attention to realism is that it has to be unfailingly consistent throughout the gameplay itself; otherwise there's a clunking sense of the spell being broken. As ever, this mainly applies to the commentary – from cuddly old Murray Walker. There are really only four or five branches of speech possibility, relating to who's driving, who they've just collided with or overtaken and whether or not they've just left the track. At times, this template approach renders the difference in tone laughable. During the relatively pedestrian qualifying sessions, Murray is hugely excited, with shrieks of: "AND! OUT! COMES! (swish of CD, normal voice...) David Coulthard." But, throughout clumsy, incredibly dangerous

and much more exciting mid-race shunts, Murray occasionally feels moved to mumble: "Definite contact there between..." Worst of all, should you spin off the track for a teeth-shattering, head-on collision with the wall, Murray barely looks up from his sandwich ("And I think he grazed the wall slightly there...") One day, someone will get this 'live' commentary business right.

For players whose idea of fun it is to finely craft and re-craft their racing lines, peeling wafer-thin shavings off lap-times, Time Attack mode offers an exciting innovation:

international competition. Lap times can be converted to codes which, when uploaded onto the Sony Web site, are sorted into a weekly-updated leader board. And there's

the perfect solution for those evenings where 15, F1 2001-owning mates unexpectedly pop round: a 16-player, turn-based time-attack championship.

So, dubious commentary aside, F1 2001 is the best Formula One game out there at the moment – and everything that implies. Be warned, though: the game is meticulously weighted towards the sim side, and while F1 fanboys will froth for its authenticity, arcade racing speed freaks would be wise to look elsewhere. ■ **Andy Lowe**

FORMULA ONE 2001

Why we'd buy it:
- Official and authentic
- Masses of options
- Intelligent save options

Why we'd leave it:
- Intimidating
- Poor commentary
- No engaging 'X-factor'

08

PlayStation 2 **NERDICT**



It plays like *Colin McRae Rally* with an extra PS2 polish (as well as the official WRC licence). And that's about the highest accolade we can give.



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP



"Ah, the exquisite thrill of rallying. Fear, mud in your eyes, a male companion angrily barking orders. It's like being back at Eton. Lovers of speed will find WRC as thrilling as a filly on heat. No other cars to race against, mind."

When it's only you, your co-driver and the dirt track, you'll need to muster every ounce of driving skill to punch in the best time.



Publisher: **SCEE** Developer: **Evolution Studios**
Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-2**

A recent theory publicised on the Web suggests *Gran Turismo 3* is nothing more than a *Pokémon*-style collection game in which racing is merely a means to amass vehicles. What a load of old tripe – *GT3* is as exhilarating as it is exhaustive. However, in order to get the most out of the game, you do have to spend hours in a virtual garage fiddling with your driveshaft. Many folks love the smell of burning rubber on Tarmac, not so many are partial to the smell of oil on overall.

In contrast, *World Rally Championship* is designed for us seekers of pure racing thrills. The number of cars available is limited to the seven models currently battling for real-world WRC supremacy and



there is only one menu for tuning options. Rallying may not be racing in the traditional first-past-the-post sense, but it's infinitely more exciting than F1. Rally tracks are often roughly carved from the landscape, full of imperfections and potential blackspots waiting to snare the unprepared or the unlucky. Every course, being run on radically differing surfaces in radically differing climates, is a completely new experience.

World Rally Championship the game recreates this experience brilliantly. At the wheel, there can be no lapses in concentration. Even if a misjudged right-hand hairpin doesn't send you hurtling off a 50 foot cliff, you're going to lose vital seconds and a vital psychological advantage over your opponents. Yes, those CPU opponents do feel real, especially when Carlos Sainz – the bastard! – is always ten seconds ahead.

Some of the longer stages in the game will actually leave you shattered upon completion. Corners where you can simply ease off the throttle and drift around are rare, and most require you to fight



SUPER SPECIAL GREAT

Try out some of the much-loved special and super special stages in WRC's unusual split-screen mode.



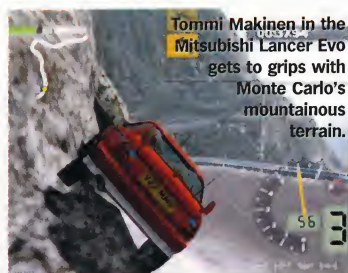
A popular feature of the real-life World Rally Championship are the special stages and the purpose-built super special stages where two drivers race head-to-head, either on the same track or on dual-circuit tracks to get the best times. Ten stages are available for you to race against a mate in WRC's split-screen Multiplayer mode. These special stages are based in Monte Carlo, Argentina, Safari, Corsica and Italy, while the super specials are based on the actual famous circuits from Australia,

Sweden, New Zealand, Portugal and the UK.

Intriguingly, you only get to view your opponent as a ghost car with which you can't collide, a feature intended to allow you to view the track properly and concentrate on your own race. However, this does dilute the cut-and-thrust element of head-to-head racing and therefore the Multiplayer mode has to go down as a mild disappointment.



Sliding around tight gravel corners results in dramatically realistic plumes of dust.



Tommi Makinen in the Mitsubishi Lancer Evo gets to grips with Monte Carlo's mountainous terrain.



Different surfaces require a radically different approach.

Always listen intently to your co-driver's advice and (hopefully) this kind of thing won't happen.



through gear changes as you attempt to brake, turn and accelerate away – even if you're driving on automatic. Rallying is unforgiving, that's why it's so draining, even in game form.

Having said that, WRC does make some understandable concessions. Even if you launch off a precipice, you're returned to the track in three seconds without so much as a popped rib. Vehicle damage is probably the best ever seen in a videogame, with crumples, smashes and scrapes all visibly taking their toll on your dirtying motor, but

appropriately, with all the displays matching the FIA's own, so what you see on screen closely resembles TV coverage. You can even use the pre-race promo video to learn from the way the pros attack a particular type of corner before applying their techniques in your own runs.

TRACKS OF MY TYRES

Input from the seven current rally car manufacturers (Ford, Subaru, Citroen, Mitsubishi, Peugeot, Hyundai and Skoda) has been invaluable. You will find, with persistence, that the

Peugeot 206 is faster on Tarmac and the Subaru Impreza marginally more stable on gravel, while the Focus is probably the best all-rounder.

Whereas in GT3 the cars are the stars, here the courses are king. A quick spin around the opening stage at Monte Carlo immediately reveals the scope of Evolution's ambition. High on a mountain top, you can see the track stretching into the distance. This is no static background illusion – everything you can see exists in 3D. There are 14 rallies in the WRC and here each consists of five stages. When added to multiplayer stages this makes for around 80 unique stages stretching over 500km end-to-end – a colossal achievement.

Agreed, Evolution has been able to spend time on fashioning its many spectacular courses because it was unburdened by the need to develop AI for rival cars. WRC can't offer you the thrill of overtaking on the final bend, but you've got to pay your money and take your choice. Not even GT3's AI is perfect – CPU cars still seem to conform to something of a predictable pattern. Do you want the [often transparent] illusion of a head-to-head contest or the very real struggle between you and the track?

The variety of terrain to be conquered with the same car, requiring strength, speed, agility and versatility, makes rallying arguably the ultimate motorsport. *World Rally Championship* truly understands the essential dynamics of rallying, and what makes it a more exciting and involving discipline than F1 or any circuit-based racer for that matter. Finally, the PS2 has managed to deliver a realistic racing game with balls. ■ Sam Richards



// **World Rally Championship is specifically designed for us seekers of pure racing thrills//**

however creaked it is, you can always limp to the finish line.

The cars steer and manoeuvre exceptionally – as long as you're prepared to brake for corners – but for the full pant-soiling experience you should choose the in-car view. It all seems that much faster, your co-driver's instructions need to be heeded instantly and you'll often feel a little more in control of your drifts.

World Rally Championship is probably the best advert the sport has ever had. The full WRC licence is used

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Why we'd buy it:
- Frighteningly realistic
- 500km of varied terrain to race across

Why we'd leave it:
- It's not much use if you dislike rallying

09

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



The super-high-tech muscle cars travel at eye-watering speeds but handle slicker than a greased up chimp.



The rear view is an essential tool to scope your rivals.



The sky darkens and the lights go on as night descends.



"I like the way Le Mans 24 Hour is after combining deep, fulfilling play with instant accessibility. It reminds me of that girl I picked up in Ritz's last night. I really had to manage my fuel to avoid pulling out early. In the game I mean!"



Oh, it's raining. Time to put on those wet weather tyres.



Super-fast, super-slick arcade handling is the order of the day.



It's necessary to refill in the pits during longer races.

LE MANS 24 HOURS

The world's toughest race provides an endurance test of epic proportions. Are you man enough for 24 hour racing insanity?

Publisher: **Infogrames** Developer: **Melbourne House**
Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-2**

Preparation is everything so construct your checklist wisely. Three tins of tomato soup (to be eaten cold); a packet of digestive biscuits; Paracetamol; five bottles of Lucozade; packets of cigarettes; a sleeping bag. Now lock yourself away. Focus. Prepare for endurance gaming at its most extreme. Prepare for **Le Mans 24 Hours**.

Your initial options include Quick Race, Championship,

Endurance. Those craving the full Le Mans experience can go straight into the 24 Hours option, choosing either full race or Petit Le Mans, a shorter version.

Thankfully, a quality game underpins this wealth of options. While handling is geared towards accessibility, various demands are placed on the player to retain realism. For example, once the Endurance championship is unlocked (ten laps minimum) tyre wear becomes a major factor. Pit too late or select the incorrect tyres and you'll soon find yourself slipping around the track.

The race experience is enhanced by the impressive draw distance and lighting effects. Ignoring some iffy shadows and jagged edges, the visuals truly shimmer when dusk falls and the stars begin to twinkle. Driving by Suzuka's famous

Ferris Wheel, illuminated against the night sky, is an experience to be savoured. The dynamic weather effects are equally well rendered adding oodles of atmosphere.

Ascending the Championship league tables proves deeply satisfying and the learning curve is well judged. Rivalries soon emerge and it's heartening to see that even AI drivers make unforced errors. On the down side, the Endurance mode is only challenging in terms of stamina and the overall arcade approach encourages cynical



gamesmanship.

Rival cars, for instance, provide handy barriers when cornering and the lack of damage means you never come off worse. It's also a pity – due to licensing sensitivities – that cars do not suffer mechanical failure, the real source of Le Mans race drama.

Criticisms aside, Melbourne House has delivered a thrilling, incredibly fast racer with enough depth and ambition to deserve a place in your game collection. The gentle learning curve and accessibility may well offer an alternative to those who find the *Gran Turismo 3* handling model too exacting. ■ **Mark Wahlbank**



// Driving by Suzuka's Ferris Wheel illuminated against the night sky is an experience to be savoured//

Le Mans 24 Hours and Time Trial. Quick Race lets you drive a mid-range car and proves diverting for a short time. The real motor sport aficionado, however, will soon crave the thrills of Championship mode where the game truly shines.

Offering eight distinct categories from Rookie GT through to Winter Endurance, the Championship mode is both satisfying and demanding. As you advance you earn points, new cars and longer, more challenging classes of race, namely the Prototype, Super Endurance and Winter

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Why we'd buy it
- A wealth of options
- Loads of unlockable stuff
- Instantly accessible

Why we'd leave it
- A bit raw in places
- No damage
- GT3 is superior

08

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



"Dat Moto GP2 is like my model girlfriend, Ivory, so it is. It's fast, it's good-looking, but it's not happy when more than one player tries to hop aboard. Also, like Ivory, the bikes squirm alot and can slip out from under you at speed."

Not so much exciting bumper-to-bumper racing, but super-exhilarating back wheel-to-front wheel racing.



With 'normal' handling, Moto GP 2 forgives small lapses of concentration.



Ah, the thrill of going too fast into a corner that everybody else has slowed down for. Brake! Brake! Brake!

MOTO GP 2

Namco's super slick two-wheel thriller returns with a mission to put the Aha! back into Yamaha.

Publisher: SCEE Developer: Namco Price: £39.99
 Players: 1-2 Out: Now

Reviewed way back in issue #03 of OPS2, *Moto GP* impressed enough to get a solid 7/10 for its sharp graphics, attention to detail, and the unforgiving, realistic handling of its Simulation mode. Slick and superbly presented, Namco's newly evolved *Moto GP 2* should have been an opportunity to right the few wrongs of the original, but despite boasting arguably one of the best racing dynamics on PS2, you

why can't I race in the wet?

Arcade mode should be the first stop. Choose 'normal' handling (with automatic transmission) and things don't get much more complicated than accelerate, brake, lean left and lean right. Pre-game settings also allow you to tweak the performance of your chosen two-wheeler. You can adjust the gear ratio (increasing the bike's top speed but affecting the acceleration) or its handling (trading off response for stability). Acceleration, braking and tyre settings can also be bravely fiddled with, while extra bikes can be unlocked as you play.

Beyond the versatile Arcade mode, *Moto GP 2* courts longevity with a further five areas of gameplay. The Season

option, for example, challenges you to qualify and race against 20 other riders in a ten-track championship. While legend tests your racing prowess against – go on, guess... that's right! – legendary bikers.

Out on the track the action is fast and intense, demanding constant concentration. Space can be tight as the procession of 500cc machines snakes around the tracks, gliding through sweeping bends, flicking left then right through tricky chicanes. Unless you learn the layout of

SO WHAT'S NEW?

A year on and *Moto GP 2* features several new bits and pieces that make the racing experience that bit more realistic and detailed.



1. MORE TRACKS The original *Moto GP* only featured five licensed tracks. *Moto GP 2* adds five more (Catalunya, Assen, Le Mans, Mugello, Sachsenring) but is still six short of a real championship tally.



2. MORE BIKES An initial choice of bikes includes the Suzuki RGV-I, Honda NSR500, Honda NSR500V and Yamaha YZR500. Proton KR3 and Pulse machines are also available, while extra big, powerful, throbbing bikes can be unlocked with extended play.



3. WET RACING One of the criticisms that has been levelled at Namco racers is that their landscapes are always nice and sunny. *Moto GP 2* counters this charge with an excellent 'wet' option, affecting handling, vision and racing strategy. Put it in Ridge!



This is what happens if you don't pay attention.

the courses, knowing where to brake and when, you won't be able to compete with the leaders. Arcade mode makes racing easier and more enjoyable for the novice, the Simulation mode has a learning curve that you need a rope to climb. The bike squirms under full acceleration, flips out if you over-rev on a tight corner, or slips straight out from under you if you touch the grass during a turn. But that's what motorbikes are all about. And, ultimately, this is a great no frills racing game. ■ Dean Evans



//Space can be tight as the procession of 500cc snakes around the tracks//

can't help feeling that the developer has pulled up a little short once again.

At first glance, *Moto GP 2* looks almost identical to its predecessor. It boasts the same Arcade, Season, Time Trial, Versus (which is disappointingly limited) and Challenge modes. And while the graphics have been improved, it's more of a makeover than plastic surgery. But thankfully, the sequel does address key criticisms, ie 'There aren't enough tracks', 'There aren't enough bikes', and 'For Foggy's sake,

MOTO GP 2

Why we'd buy it:
 - A refreshing racer
 - Excellent 3D graphics
 - Lovely race replay facility

Why we'd leave it:
 - A sadly shallow multiplayer option
 - Repetitive gameplay

07

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



"Believe me, I've ridden a few dirty bikes in my time, for sure I have. But this one is the biggest craic, wit' all the challenging tracks, intuitive handling and all of that. Pity about the lapses in realism, though, so it is."

MX 2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

Offroad mud racing meets indoor supercross and freestyle trickery in THQ's challenging bike fest. Just, whatever you do, keep off the grass!



Not recommended if you plan on having children any time after landing.



There's a decent variety of terrains. This one's called Desert. Not really.



Erm, either those two are in a different race or we've made a wrong turn somewhere...

Publisher: **THQ Entertainment** Developer: **Pacific Coast Power and Light** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-2** Out: **Now**

You get the feeling there's a rush on to produce a franchise that does for bikes what *Gran Turismo* did for cars: i.e. make a shedload of cash every other year. Namco's had a bash with *Moto GP 2* and now the latest hopeful is *MX 2002*, which can cut it with the four-wheel massive thanks to wicked speed, implausible stunts and three different styles of play: Motocross, racing round gruelling undulating tracks; Supercross, the same, but raced in huge indoor arenas; and Freestyle, the show off element, which is the riders' chance to wow the crowds with tricks.

To take part in both supercross and motocross competitions enter Exhibition mode. If you're more interested in the thrills of stunts, go for Freestyle. If you want the best of all three worlds then try the Career option which

invites you to create your own rider, before easing you into the lower leagues with aspirations of mixing it with the big boys and gaining untold riches.

Your career is played out over a racing calendar with a meeting every week to put your riding skills to the test. Only by finishing in the top three of each race can you progress to the next meet. Luckily, for those who find themselves lying in the mud more often than flying through the air, there's a tutorial to teach you some of the more cunning aspects of taming your motorised beast.

There's plenty to master, including powerslides and speed boosts, plus you'll have to learn how to move the bike in mid-flight in order to land in the best position. The pace is undeniably fast and opponents provide a tough but fair challenge, falling off and spinning out just as much as you will. Tracks are detailed and sprawling, full of hills, jumps, hairpin bends and mud. Lots of mud.

At times though, *MX 2002* can be frustrating. Your bike

can cut through a muddy track with ease but stray onto grass and you'll go flying. Also, while cornering, the bike seems to glide rather than skid. Most bizarrely, each time you hit the deck you're put back in the race at full speed, one position behind where you were before. While this keeps the pace constant, if *MX 2002* is to be vaguely realistic it should ditch such arcade-isms. It's only because the rest of the game logic is so spot on that such inconsistencies stand out like a sore thumb. ■ **Ryan Butt**

MX 2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

Why we'd buy it:
 - Top speed
 - Instantly accessible
 - Challenging tracks

Why we'd leave it:
 - Mediocre graphics
 - Fiddly control system
 - You can't ride over grass!

07

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**

ATV OFFROAD

When motorcycle racing meets anti-gravity stunt flying anything can happen! Well, anything involving quad bikes, anyway.



The real fun of the two-player game is knocking your 'friend' off his bike and then 'riding' over his 'head'.



Actually touching the ground is a rare treat...



"Quad biking should provide a spiffing long term challenge, but ATV is over before you can say 'What's happening?' I'm British, yet I've just won a race! Graphics are not so pucker either. Still it's exciting while it lasts, old boy."

Player two performs an impromptu jig (above).

Publisher: **SCEE** Developer: **Rainbow Studios** Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

This is no racing 'simulation'. If our planet's gravity worked like this we'd all be forced to wear moonboots lest we float into the ozone like stray balloons. But it doesn't matter. *ATV Offroad* is just a game and its slightly thinned gravity (plus the fact that you can alter your bike's direction mid-flight) is there to make it more playable. Fair enough.

So what you get is a series of courses made up of big hills, small hills, sharp bends and horrifying drops. Every time you hit a decent-sized ramp, you're off, soaring through the air like Elliot in *ET*. This brings a whole new tactical dimension to the racing game. When approaching a series of small hills, for example, simply flooring the accelerator

and yelling 'Geronimo!' isn't good enough. You need to build up the correct rhythm, hitting each ripple at exactly the right point to ensure a smooth ride. You'll also need to use the analogue stick carefully, pushing up to add height to your jump and pulling sharply down in order to level out.

On paper this sounds great, in reality it's a different story. Due to the deadly combination of mid-race accidents and an overly-generous catch-up system, it really doesn't matter what you do for most of the race as long as you get it together in the final straight.

The visuals aren't quite there either. Although *ATV* features a decent range of environments, from leafy forests to alpine ski resorts and scorching deserts, the colours are drab and washed out and the background scenery is sparse and desolate. This is almost made up for by the engine noises which are fabulously funny. When you're way ahead

of the pack your bike noise resembles a long raspberry being blown through a megaphone.

Not far beneath the muddy surface of *ATV Offroad*, is a great game trying to emerge. Sadly, the lack of a challenging Single-player mode and the mediocre visuals suggest that more time was needed on the project before it hurtled onto PS2. ■ **Keith Stuart**

ATV OFFROAD

Why we'd buy it:
 - The circuits are good fun
 - The physics engine is... interesting

Why we'd leave it:
 - The single-player Career mode is limited
 - Opponent AI is flawed

06

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**

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AMERICAN SPORTS

Reviews of all those crazy, complicated sports that our 'friends' over the pond play.

P 66 MADDEN NFL 2002

The latest incarnation of EA's original mega-license, and it's tighter than those lycra 'pants' the players wear.

P 67 NHL 2002

Slick, sensational ice hockey action complete with all the unnecessary yet pleasing violence of the real sport.

P 68 NBA LIVE 2002

Realistic, stat-heavy sim but is EA's straight-faced slamdunker too serious for its own good?

P 68 NBA STREET

It's basketball but, get this, in da ghetto. No pimps, pushers or prostitutes, though.

P 69 NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB

'The other American Football videogame franchise' as it is famously known. From now on.

P 69 ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003

It's in-depth, it's accurate and it's as American as apple pie. And imperialist expansionism.

WITH EXPERT ANALYSIS BY...



PJ Stimpson
Ex-footballer turned celebrity and violent felon. Allegedly!



Randy Batter
Good 'ole boy baseball player with 'traditional' southern US views.



"Madden has always been there for me, man. Through my lengthy court case, to my eventual acquittal (despite eye witnesses and video footage). The game still looks great and plays just like the real thing. I love you, John!"

A wealth of weather conditions can be selected for game day. We likes it sunny.



"But we've only just met..." This is a surefire way of stopping your opponent.



Replays are both incredibly realistic and painful to watch...

MADDEN NFL 2002

Every year Madden polishes his odd-shaped sports sim ball and kicks it up the US sales charts. But should us Brits bother to catch it?

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Sports Price: £44.99
Players: 1-4 Out: Now

Four words are uttered at the start of every EA Sports sim: "It's in the game!". Meaning, of course, that if something is in the real game then it will be in the simulation. However, these words provide no end of mirth when the game in question happens to be FIFA. Strikers shimmying their way to a 'sweet spot' and scoring every time – is that "in the game"? No, it's bloody not (and hopefully won't be in the videogame from now on), so it's just as well that Madden NFL 2002 is here to back up EA's far-fetched claim with incredibly realistic gameplay and a host of dynamic new features.

Take Easy Play, for example. If your knowledge of American football is nil or somewhat hazy after the constant schedule shuffling of the TV coverage, then this new mode strips all the unnecessary complications out of the game and lets you get straight down to choosing simplified strategies with which to drive your padded posse forwards. If you should require further nurturing in

this full-blooded contact sport then Big John is on hand to coach you through the rules and strategies in another new mode called Coach's Corner.

Whether you're a big fan or not, no sports game offers the sheer unbridled depth of this one – it really has got the lot. Every NFL team and player has been included, as have all the best teams stretching back several decades. But if you can't stomach those tasteless strips and dubious names then you can, at last, create your own team from



//There's plenty going on to distract you – most notably gyrating cheerleaders//

scratch and compile your own dream roster.

On the field of combat a whole host of new animations have been shoe-horned in, including helmets flying off amid crunching tackles and players clutching their shattered shins before being stretched off. All of this is replayed to stunning effect with some bullet-time rotations that let you get right into the thick of the action. The game's attraction isn't just confined to the pitch though, there's plenty going on around the sidelines to distract you



Check out the attention to detail in that quarterback animation. Smokin'!

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

When EA published the first console version of *John Madden Football* on the Sega Mega Drive back in 1990, it caused ripples throughout the games world.



Not only did *John Madden Football* harness the atmosphere generated by American football, but it was fun to play too, even if you weren't a fan. As you can see from this screenshot, times have changed dramatically from a graphical point of view and the *Madden* of yesteryear is a far cry from the stunningly rendered beast that has set up home in our PS2s. Featuring teams of squat little midgets and animation via *South Park*, *John Madden Football* looks primitive nowadays but compare the gameplay with *NFL 2002* and very little has really changed. A commendable feat and proof that EA Sports can get at least one 'football' game right...

— most notably gyrating cheerleaders and stressed-out Head Coaches. This coupled with the incredible level of detail on the actual players underlines EA Sports' dominance in the visual field.

EA Sports knows that this is the only American football game you'll need and has gone to great lengths to ensure that the package will last you an entire year until the next instalment ships. Aside from the numerous game modes there are the Madden Cards which are earned by achieving certain feats in the game. There are nearly 500 to collect and they can be used to unlock extra teams and stadia or even as currency to bet on the outcome of the matches with your mates.

There is so much content in *Madden NFL 2002* that to truly do it justice it would take a review of *War And Peace*-like proportions. But suffice to say, *Madden NFL 2002* must be applauded for utilising the rich hardware on offer to provide gameplay which is nigh on perfect. Yes, that good.

■ Ryan Butt

MADDEN NFL 2002

Why we'd buy it:

- Looks incredible.
- Rammed with options.
- Expert tuition.

Why we'd leave it:

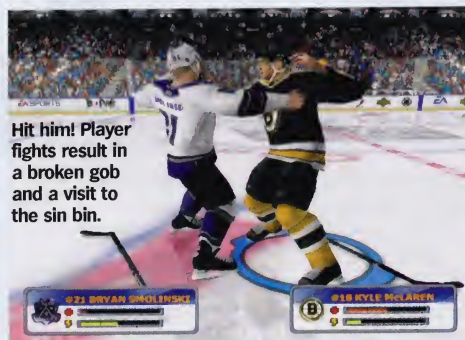
- Will only appeal to fans.
- Defending is still mind numbingly boring.

09

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



The presentation, gameplay and graphics are some of the best we've seen in a sports game.



Hit him! Player fights result in a broken gob and a visit to the sin bin.



"There ain't nuthin' like a good ol' fight to liven up a sportin' occasion, and this here NHL 2002 is full of 'em. Gameplay is as inviting and long-lasting as my cousin, Mary-Jo. And them there graphics sure are purdy!"

NHL 2002

Slick gameplay and fisticuff flare-ups combine in EA's delicious ice hockey free-for-all.

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Sports (Canada)
Price: £39.99 Players: 1-2 Out: Now

Last season's *NHL* on PS2 was an ice hockey extravaganza, featuring true next-gen graphics and fast, easy-to-get-into action. A new remix has inevitably appeared but EA Sports has decided, quite wisely, to freeze everything that made the original game so enjoyable, while melting the eyes with sparkling new presentation and extra features.

Fans can now further indulge their sporting obsession in a Career mode that is spread over ten seasons with all 30 NHL teams and 20 International squads, as well as



//Bursting at the seams with top drawer presentation, intuitive passing and spectacular goals//

being able to design their own odd-looking stars in the Create-A-Player mode (see Local Hero). Graphics have been given an expensive-looking makeover with smoother animation for speedier gameplay, and more realistic player faces. While the occasional slowdown that affected *NHL 2001* has been banished to the sin bin.

The TV-style coverage is better than before, with a unique 'Game Story' recap showing exciting events such as a team's early domination, plus a clever 'Breakaway Cam' giving a unique eye-level perspective of a one-on-one with the opposition goalie, complete with hazy adrenaline-pumping visuals and heartbeat sound effects. Instant replays of major pieces of action are cut seamlessly into the game, so that a great save from the keeper is shown in dramatic multi-angled vignettes.

With one eye on EA's tendency for looks over gameplay, it was a worry that any improvement in presentation for *NHL 2002* would overshadow changes in how it played. Not so. The frantic passing and movement combined with the brutal tackles and slap shot goals

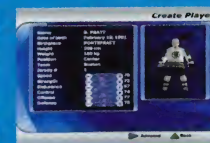
LOCAL HERO

Witness the birth of a new sporting superstar with *NHL 2002*'s Create-A-Player mode



1. The face

Start by choosing the player's eyes, nose, mouth, skin tone and beard type and then, from a wealth of stats on the next pages, you can add a name, birthplace, playing style, etc.



2. The game

And dream forward Barry Pratt is born! Once you've chosen a team for the plucky chap, the game automatically places him in the starting line-up.



3. The stats

He shoots... he scores! From zero to hero — the fat, 50-year-old ice hockey veteran from Pontefract does the UK proud and slots home his first goal for the Boston Bruins.

captures the excitement of the sport in a way that has never been achieved before.

The main new addition to the series is the NHL cards. An icy version of the Madden cards to be found in EA Sports' *Madden NFL 2002*, these are bought in packs with points that you earn by completing *Tony Hawk's*-style tasks, such as scoring a hat-trick or winning ten face-offs in a single period. Bringing back memories of Panini football sticker albums, these NHL cards mainly feature a sportsman and endless stats and figures on their career, but others can also unlock special player celebrations, cheats and 'Easter Egg' bonuses.

NHL 2002 is great fun for both absolute beginners and

obsessive ice hockey fans who will want to fiddle with every aspect of their team. There's an overwhelming amount of options, allowing gamers to customise their own player

celebrations and, through a set of special sliders, select how easy or difficult you want to make the hockey opposition. *NHL 2002* is also one of the funniest two-player games you can thrash on PS2, especially when the fists start flying in the comical scraps that almost qualify as a beat-'em-up mini-game.

Bursting at the seams with top drawer presentation, punishing tackles, intuitive passing, spectacular goals and some of the most impressive commentary ever heard in a videogame, *NHL 2002*'s improvements make a great game even better. ■ Jamie Sefton

NHL 2002

Why we'd buy it:

- Extremely playable.
- Fab TV presentation.
- NHL card collectables.

Why we'd leave it:

- If you have *NHL 2001* and can't afford splashing out another forty quid.

08

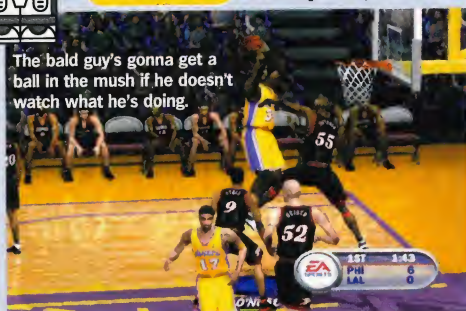
PlayStation 2 VERDICT



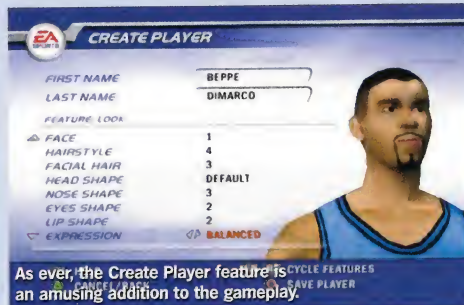
"Like a suspect released on parole, NBA Live is back and 2002 adds some cool management options plus plenty of new moves. Man, there are now more dummies than an American homicide jury. Still one for fans only, though."

NBA LIVE 2002

The latest EA basketball extravaganza certainly looks and sounds the part, but does it have the silky moves to match?



The bald guy's gonna get a ball in the mush if he doesn't watch what he's doing.



As ever, the Create Player feature is an amusing addition to the gameplay.



Replays adopt this widescreen angle. Don't ask us why.

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Sports (Canada) Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4 Out: Now

So far, EA Sports has had a bit of trouble transferring its bestselling hoops franchise to PS2. NBA Live 2001 wasn't an exceptional basketball game. In fact, it was actually less playable than its most recent PSone equivalent. So what dribbling trickery can they bring to the NBA court this time round?

The problem is, it must be tough for EA Sports' boffins to find ways to add new features to each successive incarnation in the series. Nonetheless, Live 2002 does manage just that. Following the usual slick EA Sports front-end, there's an option you won't have seen before: Franchise. This enables you to act as manager to several teams over successive seasons. There are contractual and financial issues to settle, and you even get to scout for

more affordable rookies to recruit. Statistics junkies will lap it up like sporting cream.

Also, the presentation has been pumped up. The pre-match sequences and post-scoring celebrations are great and add immensely to the atmosphere. As do the new, improved replays which use motion blur and other tricks to enhance the realism. Unfortunately, something has gone awry with the in-game graphics. Admittedly, the players look stunning; each is a true individual, from the broadness of his shoulders to the wrinkles on his forehead (you only have to glance at the Create a Player mode to see how intricately realised each model is). But there's still something lacking. Despite a great-looking crowd, those ever shiny reflections on the court surface and flawless animation, it looks as if the players have been blue-screened into the action, like a dodgy Doctor Who special effect.

Action-wise, there are the usual one-off games, one-off seasons and the so-so one-on-one games held over from

the original, but Franchise is the significant addition to the series. In terms of on-court action, it's a familiar basket of balls, although Live 2002 provides a slightly tighter game than Live 2001 – particularly on the offensive side of things, where you can now perform all manner of dummy passes and fakes. While it may lack a certain panache, there's nothing inherently wrong with the gameplay.

Overall this is a quality – if not hugely revolutionary – basketball sim. EA will get it right eventually. ■ Paul Rose

NBA LIVE 2002

Why we'd buy it:
- It's slick and playable
- Packed to the shorts with statistics and options

Why we'd leave it:
- A straight basketball game that will only appeal to fans

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

NBA STREET

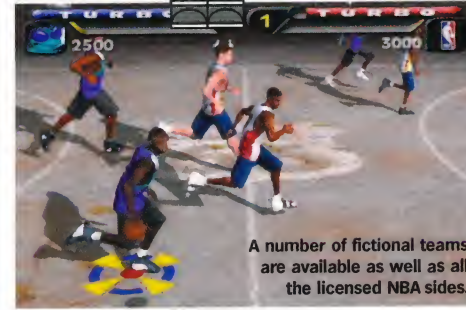
Basketball for basket cases, NBA Street says goodbye to the stadia and the rules and hello to trickstyle b-ball on the mean streets of Inner City USA.



Combos and spectacular dunks give you buckets of points which in turn build up that trick meter.



NBA Street is not set in Lowestoft.



A number of fictional teams are available as well as all the licensed NBA sides.

Publisher: EA Sports BIG Developer: EA Sports Price: £39.99
Players: 1-2 Out: Now

Not your usual EA Sports fare, is NBA Street. The attention to detail is minimal, stats don't play a big part and there's no painstakingly accurate physics model going on. And rather than being a totally realistic sim, it attempts to take the sport back to the street and in the process have a bit of 'fun' with it.

Firstly, the normal player number of five-on-five has been reduced to three-on-three, making for more quick-fire passing and shooting. You only get a single point for a basket within the area and two from outside and, because this is street b-ball, fouling your opponent is just part and parcel of the game and goes un-penalised. It's like playing football with no offside and deadball kicks, getting rid of

the elements that normally slow the game down. NBA Street is the fast food of basketball – all the action, the outrageous slam dunks and alley-oops without any of the dull tactical stuff. The locations are typical downtown haunts like the beach, the boulevard or by the subway and all are complete with fully-animated, loitering spectators.

Although, as is the norm for basketball games, the play is pretty much relentless end-to-end action, because the moves are so much more of a spectacle, casual b-ball fans won't tire of the gameplay quite so quickly. This being street basketball, the emphasis is on doing flashy tricks rather than simply scoring baskets. The more 'long-range', 'special deliveries' and 'reel2reels' you perform, the more points you earn and the more prizes you receive.

Different tricks enable you to get past players when one-on-one, or perform unfeasible slam dunk combos, but

most of all just give you the chance to embarrass a human opponent with your skills – oh yes, NBA Street provides a great two-player experience with gamers continually trying to out-perform each other with ever more elaborate moves. Play NBA Street alone though, and it's only a moderate, limited diversion. So then, one's dull, two's great company, and four would've been great... ■ Nick Jones

NBA STREET

Why we'd buy it:
- Good fun and easy to pick up and play
- Ace two-player action

Why we'd leave it:
- Not much longevity
- Basic basketball gameplay

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 2002

Is Acclaim mad to take on *Madden*, or does it have a few neat tricks under its shoulder pads?



Publisher: **Acclaim** Developer: **Acclaim Studios Austin** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

Daring to duke it out directly with EA's mighty *Madden* is tantamount to madness in the highly competitive world of American football sims. Taking into account that Acclaim's long-running franchise has always been radically inferior to EA's behemoth, we have to admit that the prospects for *Quarterback Club* weren't looking too promising.

But after two years of development, the finished game has turned out surprisingly well and there's little to separate the NFL duellists, especially in terms of looks. The gameplay is where the real contest lies though, and hats off to this game for spicing up the genre with a



"I never would have thought *Quarterback Club* could compete with *Madden*, but the innovative *Quarterback Challenge* mode and fun defensive play are like crucial pieces of evidence planted by a crack team of shady gridiron lawyers!"



"Kick it already! C'mon, get on with it, man!"

much needed sprig of variety. The main showcase is the *Quarterback Challenge* mode which is almost like a *Track And Field*, or rather *Combat School*-style sub-game in which you tackle a series of novel events for supremacy against your fellow pros. Ducking and weaving

past inanimate objects and lobbing balls at targets is pretty much the order of things, but if you connect a MultiTap then it makes for a compelling contest against your mates. Another good feature is the three-step *Defensive Play* editor as it makes the usually tiresome chore of defending a little bit more interesting.



As ever, planning your 'plays' is an essential route to success.

As solidly as it plays, *Quarterback Club* lacks the spectacular presentation and assured enjoyment of *Madden NFL 2002*, but some fine original features mean there is ultimately very little to separate the two. It could purely be down to individual taste on this one. ■ **Ryan Butt**

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 2002

Why we'd buy it:
- Some good features
- Instantly accessible

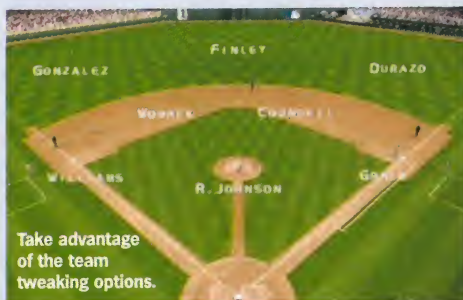
Why we'd leave it:
- More for hardcore fans
- Doesn't have the *Madden* pizzazz

08

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003 FEATURING DEREK JETER

Don your cap and tight trousers and pitch in with the US sport of swings.



Take advantage of the team tweaking options.

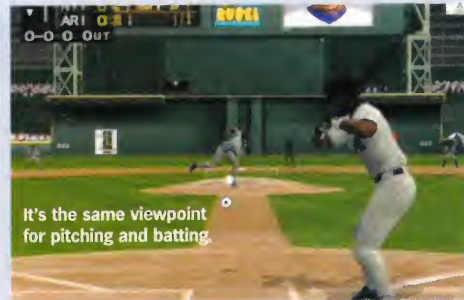
Publisher: **Acclaim** Developer: **Acclaim** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

It's fair to say that baseball has never really caught on in the UK. You're hard pushed to find it in even the satellite TV listings and we've probably learned more about the sport from *Charlie Brown* and friends than Joe Di Maggio and Derek Jeter. Still, if you're dying to get your mitts on a baseball sim, *ASB 2003* is as faithful and comprehensive a representation as you could hope for.

The game features all 30 teams from the North American Major League, all



"Listen boy, you goddamn limeys might get off on that there soccer, but it ain't no match for baseball. Tactics, speed, totally hot commentary. So what if no one can understand the goddamn scores?"

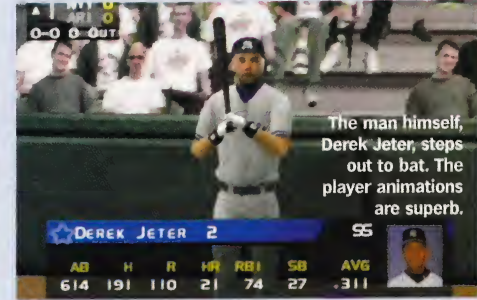


It's the same viewpoint for pitching and batting.

with up-to-date and fully-licensed rosters, uniforms and stadiums. There are ten game modes available, from Quick-fire exhibitions to complete Seasons. The scope for tweaking your chosen team is incredible, and you also have the option to start afresh and build your own nine from scratch. A stint with the Brooklyn Armadillos anyone?

Out in the diamond, things run very smoothly once you've got a handle on the multiple pitching and batting options. As with dear old cricket, the game is a tactical battle between bat and ball and you'll need your thinking cap on as much as you'll need precision timing on the Dual shock.

The animation is slick and player renders are superb. The commentary is so



The man himself, Derek Jeter, steps out to bat. The player animations are superb.

DEREK JETER 2 SS
AB H R HR RBI SB AVG
614 191 110 21 74 27 .311

outstanding. It's worthy of mention – a three-man team get it spot on every pitch and lend an atmosphere to proceedings that *Pro Evolution Soccer* could only dream of.

Providing you enjoy the sport enough to get past first base, *All-Star Baseball 2003* is an absorbing and often exciting feast of Stateside action. ■ **Nick Ellis**

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003: FEATURING DEREK JETER

Why we'd buy it:
- In depth, fully-licensed and cracking fun to play

Why we'd leave it:
- We were crap at rounders at school

07

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



ALLSPORTS

A reviews smorgasbord of all the sports stars we couldn't categorise anywhere else.

P 70 SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT

Join the gorgeous Anna Kournikova as she valiantly makes it all the way to the third round before being knocked out by an unseeded 12 year old.

P 72 CRICKET 2002

Leather on willow, attractive white jumpers, cheeky googlies – the world of cricket is here in all its glory.

P 73 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

The golfing maestro drives EA's latest pitch 'n' putt sim straight towards the pin marked 'Quality'.

P 74 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2002

All the excitement of the real World Championship, but without O'Sullivan's pre-match slagging off!

P 74 RUGBY

The best rugby game yet seen and you don't have to be a fart-lighting ex-public schoolboy to appreciate it.

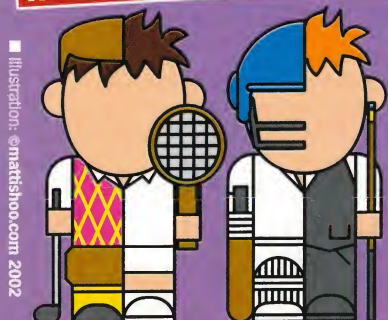
P 75 SALT LAKE 2002

The official game of this year's Winter Olympics. Skiing, bobsleigh and other activities that'll freeze your privates.

P 75 ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

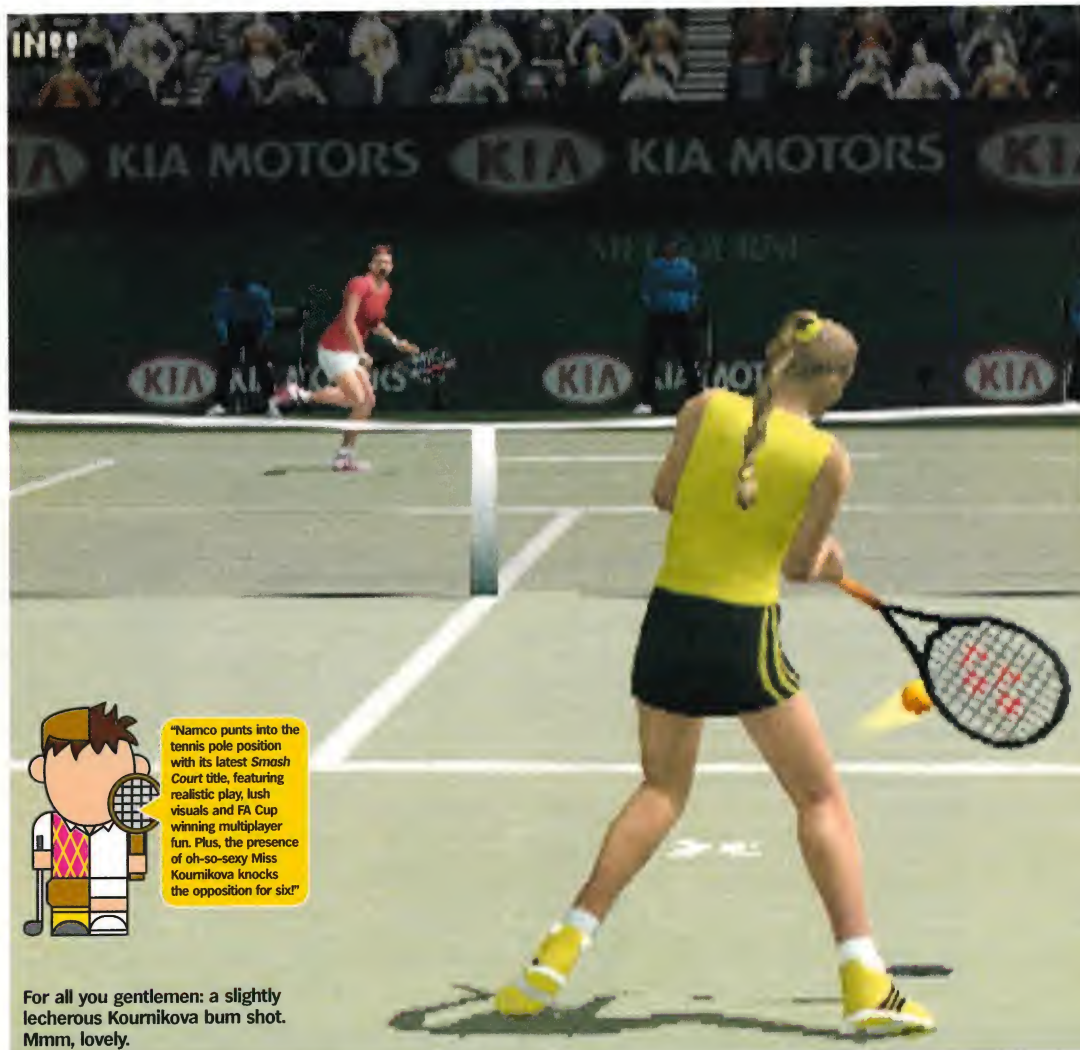
Button bashing is back again with Konami's legendary running, jumping, throwing athletics-'em-up.

WITH EXPERT ANALYSIS BY...



Marvin and Melvin Muddled

Two confused pundits who love every sport so much, they're never quite sure what they're commentating on. A bit like Sky Sports presenters.



"Namco punts into the tennis pole position with its latest Smash Court title, featuring realistic play, lush visuals and FA Cup winning multiplayer fun. Plus, the presence of oh-so-sexy Miss Kournikova knocks the opposition for six!"

For all you gentlemen: a slightly lecherous Kournikova bum shot. Mmm, lovely.

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT



Namco abandons the old cute, big-headed cartoon characters in favour of full-on virtual Kournikova thrills. A wise decision.

Publisher: **SCEE** Developer: **Namco** Price: **£39.99**
Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

S *Smash Court Tennis* growing up? As the volatile legend of Centre Court, John McEnroe, often ranted: "You cannot be serious!" But we most surely are. What started out as a rival for *Super Tennis* on the SNES has matured over three generations of games console and now takes itself seriously enough to rub shoulders with the pros.

Gone are the super-deformed characters, goof-ball equipment, backstreet tournaments and far-out courts. In their place are authentic Grand Slam venues and not just one, but eight tennis superstars – all finely sculpted and sporting their trademark serves, swaggers and, in the case of Ms Kournikova, sex appeal. But before you beat the ground in despair, let us quickly point out that the change is most definitely for the better.

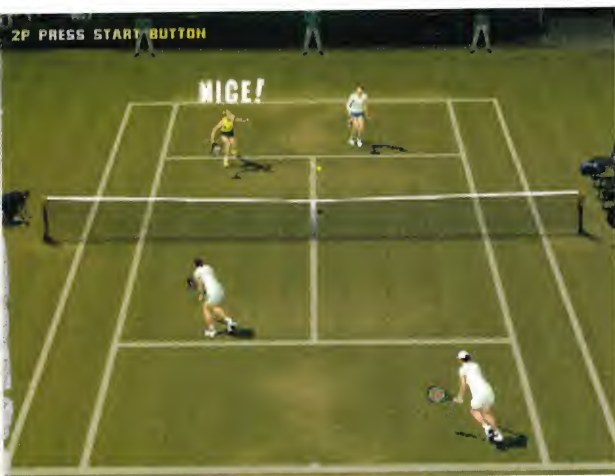
You see, stripping aside the humour from the popular series, *Smash Court Tennis* has always had a finely tuned and purring engine that lovingly recreates every slice, lob, topspin and dropshot from real tennis and adapts them into an easily accessible control method. This in turn enables you to play like a legend within no time at all

and place the ball wherever the hell you want on your opponent's side of the net. This element is still very much intact and the massive (and we mean *massive*) graphical upgrade means that you can now experience tennis that looks as perfect as it plays.

Of course, it just wouldn't be *Smash Court Tennis* without sporting at least some quirkiness, and this comes into play thanks to the pressure-sensitive joypad buttons. By anticipating where a returned shot is going to land, you can stab the desired shot button inwards and keep it depressed until you're ready to strike – upon which the ball will transform into a glowing comet and blast over the net like an Exocet missile. Likewise, when a high ball is incoming, a red circle appears under it. Move into this circle and you'll turn green before smacking a raging thunderbolt back at your stunned opponent. Old habits die hard, eh?

NEW BALLS, PLEASE

The main purpose of the game is to guide one of the eight playable characters (four male, four female) on to Grand Slam victory and you can do this in four different events: Australian Open, Tournoi De Paris, Wimbledon and US Open. Maybe you can even achieve the Impossible and



Get a good connection between ball and racquet and the word 'Nice!' will appear. Some challenges require you to get a certain percentage of these.

THE EIGHT RACQUET-EERS

Featured in *Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament* are eight of the sport's hardest hitters.

SAMPRAS



AGASSI



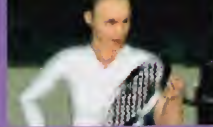
RAFTER



KAFELNIKOV



HINGIS



KOURNIKOVA



SELES

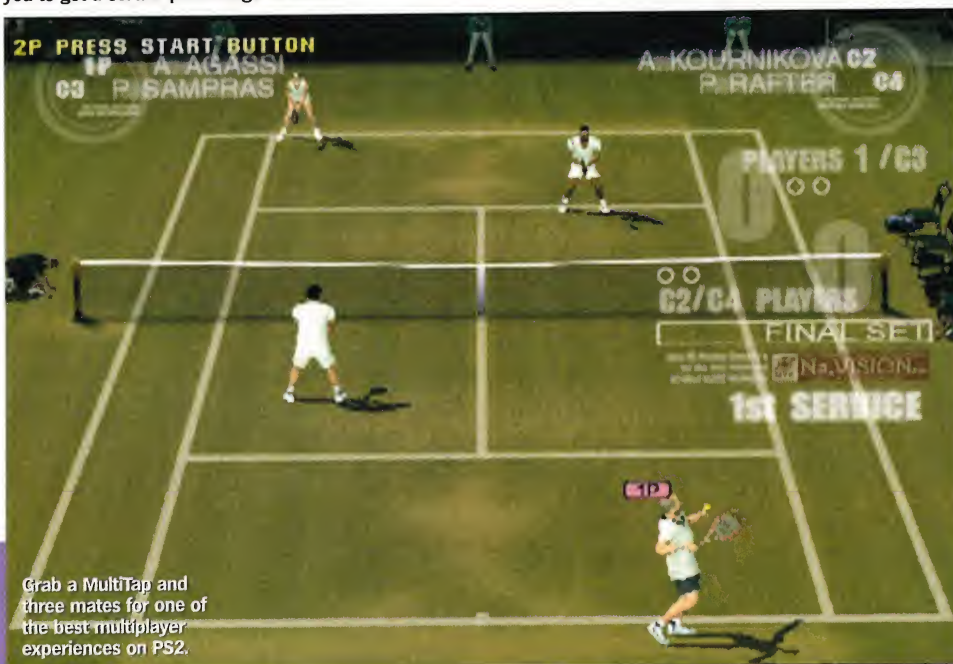


DAVENPORT

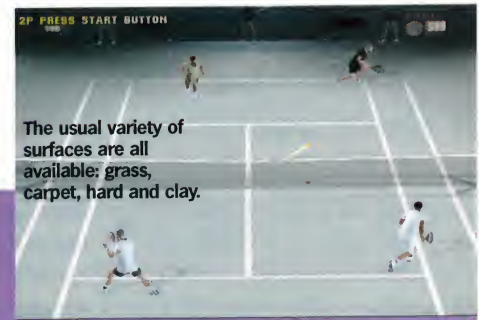


Raising the roof in the male corner we have 'pistol' Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Pat Rafter and Yevgeny Kafelnikov and raising wood in the female corner we have 'Swiss Miss' Martina Hingis, Anna Kournikova, Monica Seles and Lindsay Davenport. But that's not quite all, there are a few extra

characters to unlock, too. For example, beat Arcade mode on the hardest difficulty (without losing a game) with a male and female player and you'll unlock Red Ace and Namco mascot Hitomi Yoshino. Okay so they aren't exactly Tekken characters or Pac-Men but they'll do. Won't they?



Grab a MultiTap and three mates for one of the best multiplayer experiences on PS2.



steer Anna Kournikova to her first Gram Slam victory! It isn't just a case of lifting the trophy, end of story, because rewards are obtained and unlocked by winning the respective title in both the men and woman's categories. Your prizes can be admired in the lavish Trophy Room in which you can also peruse other bonus features you pick up on your travels. Aside from the Pro Tournament mode, the game also serves up a quick-fire Arcade mode, a neat (for the purpose of longevity) Time Attack mode plus all the usual exhibition and practice (Challenge) modes that ensure you'll still be coming back for more long after the play-induced blisters on your thumb have burst.

Whether you're a tennis nut of Seles-stabbing proportions or your meagre interest extends no further than Britain's traditional flop-out at Wimbledon, you won't fail to notice just how authentic this game is. From Hingis's mono-sleeved skintight Lycra top to Seles's trademark grunts, Kournikova's pert behind to Agassi's gleaming crown, *Smash Court Tennis* is undoubtedly the real deal. The player animation, meanwhile, is immaculate down to characters testing the racket strings on the sole of their plimsolls to the long, lingering glance over the net when you pull something special out of the hat.

Even the crowd reacts accordingly to your play and the cream on the strawberry is watching the line judges dodge a stray volley. Can nothing put *Smash Court Tennis* off its stroke? Sadly, yes – even this spunky champion is prone to

the odd niggly injury.

Try and try as it might, Namco has still failed to solve the age-old problem of the player at the far end of the court being at an instant disadvantage; stranded at the top of the screen, you can never seem to make up ground as easily as your near-side counterpart. Also, for some strange and completely inexplicable reason, achieving an ace is



//The cream on the strawberry is watching the line judges dodge a stray volley//

nigh on impossible, while the ball never seems to go out apart from during service. Surely not even the eight pros featured in this game can be that good – Anna Kournikova certainly ain't!

As is tradition, *Smash Court Tennis* is at its best when a MultiTap and three other human players come into the equation – although the severe lack of playable characters strips a lot of the unpredictability out of the otherwise excellent multiplayer experience. Whereas in, say, *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis* on PSone, there were over 20 different fictional characters – some had lightning-quick serves, others could deliver a backhand smash with almost robot-like efficiency – the strictly

professional contingent here just don't perform radically differently from each other and so the matches are always a little too even.

It is testament to *Smash Court Tennis's* overall quality, though, that it can suffer such handicaps and still stand head and shoulders above everything else, tennis-wise, on PS2. There are enough engaging modes to keep singles

players on their toes for weeks. Then, of course, there's the four-player doubles which has even, on occasion, pushed *Pro Evolution Soccer* off the office machine at

lunchtimes. For just how long remains to be seen, but one thing's for sure, you'll still be playing this long after the English pros have made another less than spectacular premature bow out of Wimbledon. Smashing! ■ Ryan Butt

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT

Why we'd buy it

- A great game of tennis
- Looks unbelievably real
- Ace multiplayer gaming

Why we'd leave it

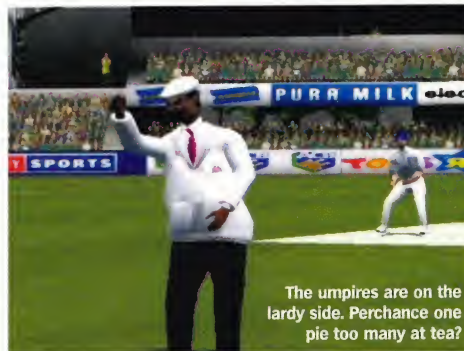
- Not enough characters
- It's virtually impossible to serve an ace



PlayStation 2 VERDICT



"EA pots black and scores a maximum '180' with this slam-dunking cricket sim. The realistic batting and sensitive bowling are accompanied by more teams and stats than you could pitch a nine iron at. Linesman, eat my goal!"



CRICKET 2002

Googlies, silly mid-off and awkward bouncers. Not, as you may think, a dodgy nightclub-'em-up but EA's cracking cricket sim.

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Sports Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4 (with Multitap) Out: Now



The English national sport has undergone something of a revolution in recent years. Women allowed in the Members Stand at Lord's, coloured kits and family entertainment for one-day games – all have helped dispel cricket's image as the preserve of the Daily Telegraph-reading toff. So clink the teacups and say hurrah to the latest incarnation of EA's *Cricket* franchise, which has also transformed itself into something far more appealing.



//As with the real, McCoy, concentration, patience and timing are the keys skills here//

Where *Cricket 2000* on PSone was flawed beyond redemption, *2002* is a highly detailed and engaging simulation that's as joyous to play as glugging Pimm's on a hot Summer's day. This is thanks in no small part to the influence of the excellent *Brian Lara Cricket*, PSone's only other cricket sim. Shiny presentation and flashy motion capture aside, it's the engaging gameplay reminiscent of *Brian Lara* that really makes *Cricket 2000* sparkle.

Given that it's always going to be tricky to recreate the fear of facing a 100mph bouncer from Glenn McGrath, or the satisfaction gained by smashing a loose delivery into the covers for six, EA Sports has captured the essence of cricket very nicely. As with the real McCoy, concentration, patience and timing are the key skills. Cricket is, after all, one of the original real-time strategy games. It's not easy either and you'll have to put in a few hours practice before you progress beyond the 'all out for 25' stage. Persistence rewards you with tense showdowns between bat and ball.

Defending your stumps and making runs is all about timing. The D-pad or analogue stick is used to select your shot type, then you can elect to play the stroke on either the front or back foot by hitting  or . A welcome inclusion on the batting side is the charge button, allowing you to

stride up the pitch to meet the delivery instead of being rooted to the crease. Bowling is a trickier prospect, with an extremely sensitive analogue stick meaning deliveries can often go wayward.

As you'd expect from EA, there's a wealth of options on offer covering nearly every aspect of international cricket (except the match fixing). Play in a ten-over slog-fest, a five-match test series or strike out for glory in the World Cup

LINE AND LENGTH

The revamped bowling is initially a little difficult to get the hang of, but practice does pay off.



1. The first concern is to aim your delivery in the right spot, using the analogue stick to guide the green circle – the worse the bowler, the larger the circle. This is quite difficult, though, because the stick is acutely sensitive. Aiming for the stumps keeps the runs down but decent batsmen guard the wicket with their lives. Siege warfare at its best!



2. The second stage is power and spin. Once you've selected where you're going to bowl, an orange power bar rises by the ball icon in the bottom-left corner. Hit as close to the line as possible for maximum effect. The final stage is something quite delightful. There's a small black dot that you can position over any section of the ball. The dot acts as your finger and positioning it in different places gives different results – swing, spin, balls that go straight, balls that rise sharply... Better reach for that MCC coaching manual.



The Stump Cam is just one of many cool angles you can choose to view replays.

one-day competition. Location, pitch type and weather conditions can all be tweaked and even Scotland is a selectable team. Still no sign of France though.

Sundries include a medley of statistical and replay options, unlockable All Time teams and commentary from the legendary Richie Benaud. Everything falls together to make for a cracking sport sim and the game will prove a soothing remedy for cricket nuts, come the inevitable failure of England against Sri Lanka this summer. ■ Nick Ellis

CRICKET 2002

Why we'd buy it:

- As accurate a sim as you could hope for
- A myriad of options

Why we'd leave it:

- Holds zero appeal for non cricket fans
- Initially tricky to play



PlayStation 2 VERDICT



HOLE IT!

Enjoy the ultimate achievement in golf – a hole in one.



1. On a short Par Three hole, compensate for the wind and elevation of the course and swing gently through the ball, then watch as it trickles towards the pin.



2. Now chuckle as Tiger raises his arm in the customary salute and takes the acclaim from the crowd.



3. Then sit back and admire your pretty new trophy ball – great for annoying your envious mates.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

Big name licenses and lush real-life courses are fine, but it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.

Publisher: EA Sports Developer: EA Sports Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4 Out: Now

Since the dawn of virtual time, golf games have hardly changed. At the forefront of the genre's lack of innovation is the 'swing bar', a power curve that requires nothing more than accurate timing to thwack the ball home. Thankfully, it seems the swing bar's days are numbered. For its latest incarnation of the *Tiger Woods PGA* licence, EA has refined the analogue control method that debuted in last year's release. You simply draw back your club by pulling down and strike by pushing forward in one fluid movement of the stick. It works like a charm.

As well as this updated swing system, Tiger now suffers from nerves when faced with a potentially match-changing shot. The camera narrows and the joypad shudders with every pounding beat of your heart as you bid for glory. EA has also borrowed ideas from comedic golf games such as PSone legend *Everybody's Golf*. Fetishistic replays, fizzing balls and fantasy locales that complement real-life courses (of which Royal Birkdale and Princeville are among the inclusions here), make for a



fresh, arcade-like experience.

The game is founded on a Career progression mode. You win cash to snap up increasingly pricey stat boosts for accuracy, power, putting and more in order to develop your golfer and prepare for taxing tournaments. *PGA 2002* is littered with other rewards for outstanding achievement (Check out Hole It!).

The Scenario mode offers more chances to advance your career by racking up dosh. Aside from the usual catch-up and personal best score challenges, a Speed mode requires you to whack the ball around nine holes and sprint after it to boost your coffers. You can also play this Speed mode independently, though it's pretty silly and should have been replaced with fun mini-games in the style of *Virtua Tennis*, for example.

The usual array of two-player options, including the office favourite, Skins mode, are all present and correct. However, despite bountiful rewards for self-improvement, the single-player mode will leave action seekers a little cold – this game is more therapeutic than addictive. That's largely because many of the challenges require significant time investment, so you can't pick it up for a quick two minute thrill à la *Tony Hawk's 3*.

Despite pristine presentation the commentary is, uncharacteristically for EA,



The bunker proves no match for your first challenger.

repetitive and rather bland. More worryingly, the AI is a little skewed, with dodgy opponents messing up the wrong shots. For example, they'll land a 95-yard chip out of the bunker within five feet of the pin, then proceed to miss the hole by three yards on the follow-up.

Overall, though, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002* is the finest realistic golf game out there. If you want total tomfoolery, petition SCE for a European release of *Everybody's Golf 3*. Until then, enjoy Tiger's latest easy victory. ■ Lee Hall

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

Why we'd buy it:
- Ace swing control method
- Tons of multiplayer fun
- and a nifty Career mode

Why we'd leave it:
- Cheesy voice-over and
- dodgy commentary
- Slightly iffy opponent AI

07

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2002

Codemasters goes for the tricky snooker and ends up potting black.



Publisher: **Codemasters** Developer: **Blade Interactive**
 Price: **£39.99** Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

As anyone who has ever spent time in a dark snooker hall pondering over the green baize will testify, playing the game is a totally different experience to watching it. You have to think several shots ahead and always ensure the white is in the correct position for the ensuing break. Blade Interactive understands this – and that's why *World Championship Snooker 2002* works so well.

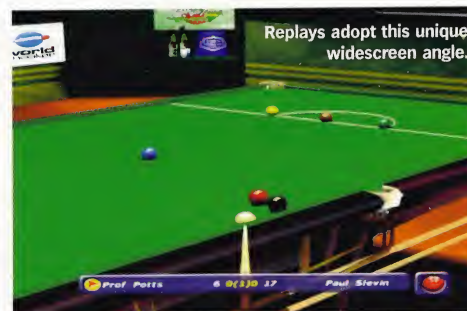
With options for single matches as well as tournaments, the game offers over 20



professional rivals, each of whom has been fully recreated – even down to their faces and, yes, waistcoats. The play area is framed by the relevant control icons and a power bar, so all that remains is to line up the shot using the ultra-precise analogue stick and set the power using a sliding gauge. It shouldn't take anyone long to get to grips with this intuitive shot-taking system.

"With its smooth controls, real players, and realistic ball physics, Codemasters' snooker sim strides out to the 18th hole and lands a knockout blow guaranteed to send snooker fans to the top of the gaming Premiership!"

While *WCS 2002*'s version of training wheels (a line indicating the direction of the shot) is useful, it is testament to the game's precision and simplicity that even novices will turn it off after a few frames. The movement of the balls – intrinsically important in a game that relies on pinpoint accuracy –



is well realised. The way they react to each other is so fluid and effortless that you take it for granted – undoubtedly the highest praise that can be bestowed upon a snooker game. It may show a little too much of the fussy nature of the game but *World Championship Snooker 2002*'s ball play is truly second to none. ■ **Keith Stuart**

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2002

Why we'd buy it:
 - Accurate simulation
 - Nice cueing action
 - Realistic pro players

Why we'd leave it:
 - Slow paced
 - Visually sparse
 - Won't convert non-fans

08

PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**

RUGBY

A first chance for PS2 owners to experience the muddy thrills of International Rugby. As long as you can remember 33 different moves, you'll be OK...



Publisher: **EA Sports** Developer: **Creative Assembly** Price: **£39.99**
 Players: **1-4** Out: **Now**

Oespite coming from an external developer, *Rugby* sticks closely to the 'accurate and playable' EA Sports blueprint. Quick Start provides easy access to the meat of the game and while the dual competitions of the Six Nations and World Cup require more preparation, it's still kept to an absolute minimum. Multiplayer mode acts as an alternative to games against the computer which can be initially unrewarding affairs.

In total there are 33 moves which are worth learning if you are to enjoy the matches to their full potential. You can scrape through with pass, drop kick and tackle, but unlike FIFA, it's impossible to fudge it thanks to the absence of



'sweet spots' and, it has to be said, massively improved AI.

The result of this, early on at least, is that *Rugby* can appear cruel and unenjoyable. Line-outs feel like an exercise in giving possession back to your opponent, scrums are lost time and time again, passing is constantly intercepted and whenever you're in control of the ball, moves forward always seem to result in a knock on. Give it time though, and a free-flowing game emerges, leading to exciting and high scoring matches. Due to the pass, run, kick and growl nature of rugby, tactics are less pronounced than those in FIFA, but Creative Assembly has taken ideas from other EA Sports titles – particularly *Madden* – and introduced 'plays' to aid defence and attack.

Unfortunately, *Rugby* suffers from a classic EA Sports trait – unresponsive controls. During play, a frustrating FIFA-style delay appears between pressing the button and seeing



"I'll have to caution this game on its near-vertical learning 'curve'. AI opponents are tough buggers and there are dozens of moves to master. Still, amends are made with the user-friendly 'play' system. Just a yellow this time."



your move on screen giving that annoying feeling that the move wasn't actually performed by you. Camera movement is equally bad, sailing from one end of the pitch to the other in an effort to drift with the attacking side.

Ultimately, *Rugby* stands as an enjoyable, if sometimes infuriating, replication of one of the most difficult sports to convert to videogame. ■ **Tim Weaver**

RUGBY

Why we'd buy it:
 - Fast, free-flowing and entertaining rugby
 - Officially licensed

Why we'd leave it:
 - Infringing camera
 - Distinct lack of teams
 - No apparent skill levels

07

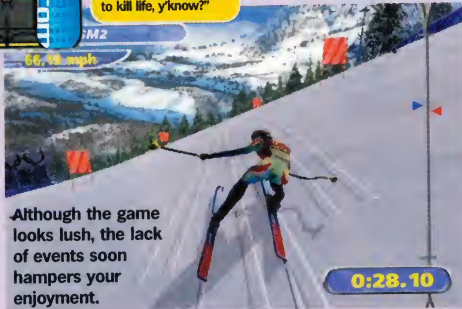
PlayStation 2 **VERDICT**



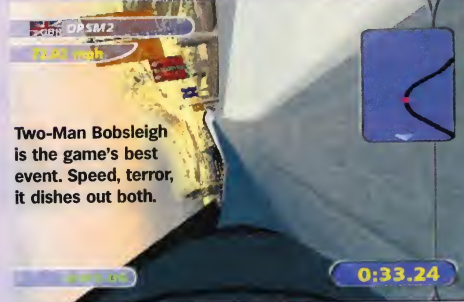
"The winter olympics are, like, a powerful symbol of man's struggle against the cold heart of nature. This game turns that quest for life into a confusing parade of identical tasks. Dude, it's like they're trying to kill life, y'know?"

SALT LAKE 2002

Several variations on downhill skiing mixed up with some freestyling and a bit of bobsleigh. Not so much winter wonderland as icy Liverpool council estate.



Although the game looks lush, the lack of events soon hampers your enjoyment.



Two-Man Bobsleigh is the game's best event. Speed, terror, it dishes out both.



The Freestyle Skiing Aerials is a woeful inclusion.

Publisher: Eidos Developer: Attention To Detail Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4 Out: Now

The mere fact that *Salt Lake 2002* is a Winter Olympics game – which has always been a tricky one for developers – is cause for initial worries. But to also discover that it includes only a tiny fraction of the events is like going on a blind date when someone has already tipped you off that your evening will be spent with Ann Widdecombe's less attractive sister.

As well as including just six events, there's only one course per event and the modes are severely limited. The actual Olympic mode is the only option worth bothering with as the rest just involve playing through the same events only in differing conditions. We can, however, give ATD some applause – at least the developer tried to make the modes sound more varied and enticing by calling

Practice mode 'Freeform' and a Challenge mode 'Classic'.

Of the six events on offer, only the Two-Man Bobsleigh stirs up any sort of interest: just because you can imagine you're playing a driving game and not freezing your virtual balls off on a polygonal mountain. The two real skiing events (Downhill and Slalom) are plain dull, the Snowboard Parallel 45 is the same as the Slalom but with a snowboard, the Ski Jump K120 Individual (?) is confusing, and the Freestyle Aerials is just terrible, full stop. And these offerings are no better in multiplayer, either.

As the game comes draped with the official Olympics seal of approval, the presentation is sleek and polished. The actual in-game graphics are generally superb, which makes the shortcomings in the mode department all the more infuriating because you know the game could have been so much better. The athletes smile, grimace and frown in concentration with frosty breath billowing from their chapped mouths in the close-ups. The physics are similarly

spot-on and you really look and feel like you're cutting through the snow with bitter determination. Sadly, the replays don't convey this action well and some ill-chosen, far-angled camera work means your skier just looks like an ant rolling down a duvet.

If you also take into consideration the lack of long term enjoyment and the fact that you have to endure loading times from hell, then your relationship with *Salt Lake 2002* can only ever end in a frosty divorce. ■ Ryan Butt

SALT LAKE 2002

Why we'd buy it:
- Fantastic presentation and commentary
- There's no curling event

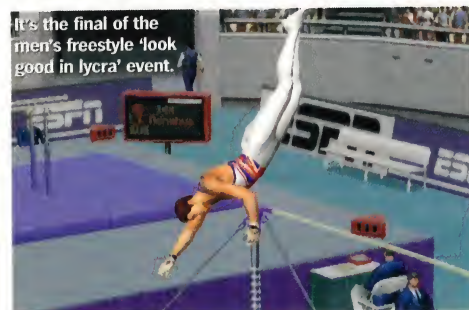
Why we'd leave it:
- No longevity
- Not much variety

05

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

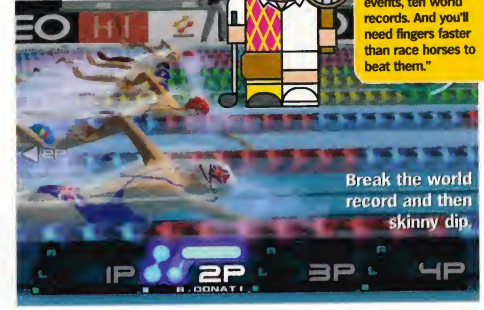
The legendary button bashing athletics sim is back once again. But is Konami's muscle-bound effort worth breaking into a sweat for?



It's the final of the men's freestyle 'look good in lycra' event.



Ah, the classic 110m hurdles: bash, bash, bash, jump, bash, bash, etc.



"Rev your engines and don your riding hat, it's fun but predictable formula one world series button bashing time again! Ten events, ten world records. And you'll need fingers faster than race horses to beat them."

Break the world record and then skinny dip.

Publisher: Konami Developer: Konami Price: £39.99
Players: 1-4 Out: Now

What we have here is the videogame equivalent of a big hot vegetarian sausage. It might look nice, but there's no meat to it. While *ESPN IT&F* clearly demonstrates the punch packed by PS2 when it comes to eye-opening visuals, the gameplay hasn't progressed much since *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* on the ZX Spectrum. Graphically, it's a gold medal winner with real life athletes animated brilliantly, convincing crowds and sumptuous presentation. But the pretty packaging can't hide the asthmatic gameplay beneath.

The ten events can be played individually or in

sequence if you want to try for medals and world records in the Championship mode. The problem is that the only real skill needed is button bashing, and this kind of skill – i.e. ultra-fast reflexes – eludes most modern players. Stick with it though and the game keeps track of your overall medal haul, and the more you win the more secrets you unlock.

Joining the usual 100m, long jump and javelin is rhythmic gymnastics, which demands the same input as Konami's other groove-based creations – you can even use the *Dancing Stage* mat to jiggle about on.

Although there's something strangely alluring about hitting two buttons very hard for several seconds to beat a virtual record, we can only really recommend this

game to diehard *Track & Field* fanatics with a MultiTap, three slightly inebriated chums and the odd rainy evening with nothing else to do. *ESPN International Track & Field* may well belong to a bygone age, but if you ever played the PSone version, you'll know that there are few things in life more amusing than watching drunken friends furiously hammering at their buttons. ■ Ryan Butt

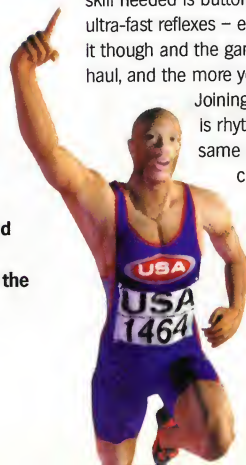
ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

Why we'd buy it:
- Great graphics
- Hilarious four-player button bashing fun

Why we'd leave it:
- Archaic gameplay
- Dodgy controls
- Might tire of it

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



SPORTS CRAZY!

The world of sport is a rich and varied buffet, full of tasty tennis temptresses and glorious feasts of football. Chow down on this selection of the more, shall we say, acquired tastes.

Sport, eh? Obviously its enduring appeal is all down to the human animal's fundamentally competitive spirit. And although there are scores of legitimate sports in the world to showcase it, there's always some *really* obscure way to demonstrate that you're the champ and

the rest of the world is populated by losers. From belching contests to three-legged limbo dancing, if you can whack a points system or a finish line on a situation, you've got a sport. That's the theory anyway, these bizarre PS2 sports games attempt to put it into practise...

BASS STRIKE



The most popular 'sport' in Britain (FACT!) but a truly dire videogame.

Publisher: THQ Developer: PAI Corporation

As the ancient saying goes: 'Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and force him to put them right back where he found them and he'll die of boredom and starvation'. True, competitive angling is an above board sport but it's woefully below par when it comes to excitement, drama and hero worship. There's a very good reason why people have posters of David Beckham and not some Bass Master on their walls. And if actually standing in a rain-pelted boat trying to outwit seafood is dull, sitting in a darkened room pretending to do it on a PS2 is virtually unforgivable.

■ 4/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #15

H3O SURFING

'Riding tubes' made as enjoyable as rush hour on the Circle Line.

Publisher: Take 2 Developer: ASCII

How? Isn't that radioactive water or something? As it happens, the extra 'H' is for 'How the hell did this get a release in the UK?' But more, it must be said, for reasons of cultural relevance than anything. With all due respect to the gnarly and sewage spattered Cornish surfing community, riding tubes is never likely to threaten football's position as our national sport. And much as we acknowledge the skill required to steer a waxed ironing board to shore, a great PS2 sporting experience it doesn't make. Throw in a few sharks and a stopwatch though and we could be talking...

■ 4/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #2



**WORLD DESTRUCTION
LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS**

Future sports tank carnage in a half-decent 3DO game shocker!

Publisher: **3DO** Developer: **3DO**

In a low rent future that's one part Running Man and two parts Poundstretcher, a new spectator sport has captured the public imagination. No, it's not an innovative fusion of Pop Idol and naked Twister. Instead, huge arenas are alive with the sound of customised battle tanks tearing each other new exhaust holes for cash and ratings. So far as reality is concerned, this puppy's off the lead and out of the park entirely. But while the game may be terrible, in the real world this fatality strewn competition would be a force to be reckoned with. Get rid of the nukes and it could be an Olympic sport. Probably.

■ 7/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #5

**CART FURY
CHAMPIONSHIP RACING**

Take F1, add nitro boosts and dull oval tracks. Yep, it's American.

Publisher: **Midway** Developer: **Midway**

If you're going to level any criticism at F1 racing, saying it's safe and boring isn't exactly a fertile starting point. Still, that's never stopped games developers from doing just that and 'imagineering' new and exotic ways to spice up the world of automotive sports. Take CART Fury. It's based on the real Championship Auto Racing Teams events in the US but with the reality budget blown on licensing blisto-tanned drivers and honeys, things rapidly get out of control. Nitro assisted flaming power boosts are one thing, but massive short cuts? Cheating in sport is deplorable, right? Hey! Where'd everybody go?

■ 6/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #10

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY

Chaotic racing across Africa? No wonder Mark Thatcher got lost.

Publisher: **Acclaim** Developer: **Broadsword Interactive**

As extreme expressions of sporting endeavour go, racing like a maniac across the width of Africa certainly takes some beating. Especially when the same race is open to motorbikes, cars, dune buggies and trucks. There certainly aren't many motorsports where breaking down can lead to retirement on grounds of acute dehydration and/or death by guerrilla crossfire. As a game and transported to the living room, the Paris-Dakar Rally necessarily loses some of its tense atmosphere, but that doesn't diminish the unique challenge at hand. Just remember to hang a right at Libya okay?

■ 5/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #13

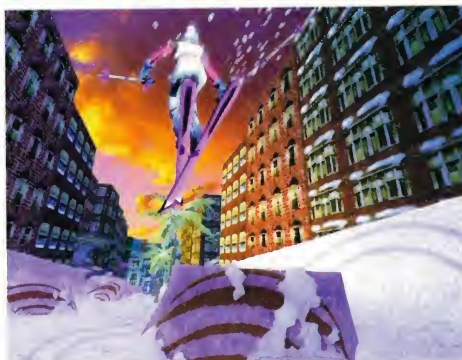
**SKY SURFER**

Cloud surfing! It's not just extreme, it's plain mental.

Publisher: **Virgin Interactive** Developer: **Idea Factory**

You can see how this particular entry in the extreme sport handbook came about. Let's face facts, throwing yourself out of plane at 20,000 feet and free falling for a couple of minutes must be a little boring. So strapping a snowboard to your feet and performing tricks on the way down seems like the logical way to spice things up. Unfortunately, whatever ballsy thrills that sky surfing may have just don't translate to the gaming world. Proof, if proof were needed that sometimes there's no substitute for trying the real thing. After you though.

■ 3/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #4

**JONNY MOSELY
MAD TRIX**

Into snowboarding? Pah! Freestyle skiing's where it's at. Apparently...

Publisher: **3DO** Developer: **3DO**

With snowboarding having cornered the market in phat air and the whole subculture of winter sports cool, poor old skiing has found itself left out in the cold in more ways than one. Arguably it's harder to pull off Canadian Duct Tape 780s with a plank on each foot than it is with just one between the two, but more often than not it looks plain awkward. It's like doing PE in loafers and black socks while all the other kids have shin pads and Predators. That said, Mr Mosely certainly knows how to throw shapes. Can you keep up? Do you want to? Probably not, actually.

■ 4/10 ■ Official PlayStation 2 Magazine #18

**SPORTS WORLD OF
THE TRANSMUNDANE**

And you thought videogame sports had cornered the oddity market...

1. To psyche himself up for a bout in 1992, boxer Daniel Caruso pounded himself in the face with his gloves. During this, he broke his own nose and was disqualified from competing.
2. In January this year, hundreds of betters lost their chance to collect winnings at a horse race in Southwell when, one by one, all the riders either fell or withdrew from the race before passing the finish line. Most galling of all though, jockey Tony McCoy eventually climbed back on and won the race by default. But by this point most of the punters had ripped up their betting slips. The idiots.
3. During a cricket match in Oz some years back, batter Stan Dawson was hit by the delivery which set fire to a box of matches in his trouser pocket. While he was trying to stop the flames spreading to his 'goolies', he was tagged out.
4. Eddie Gaedel was a 3'7" midget who played one game of baseball for the St. Louis Browns vs the Detroit Tigers. When Gaedel stood up at the plate his diminutive height gave the pitcher Bob Cain a strike zone of only one and a half inches.
5. When Aston Villa was formed in 1874 the only match they could organise at first was with a rugby team. To make it fair, the first half was played with rugby rules, the second with soccer rules. Villa won, 1-0.

ACTION



METER DASH



90

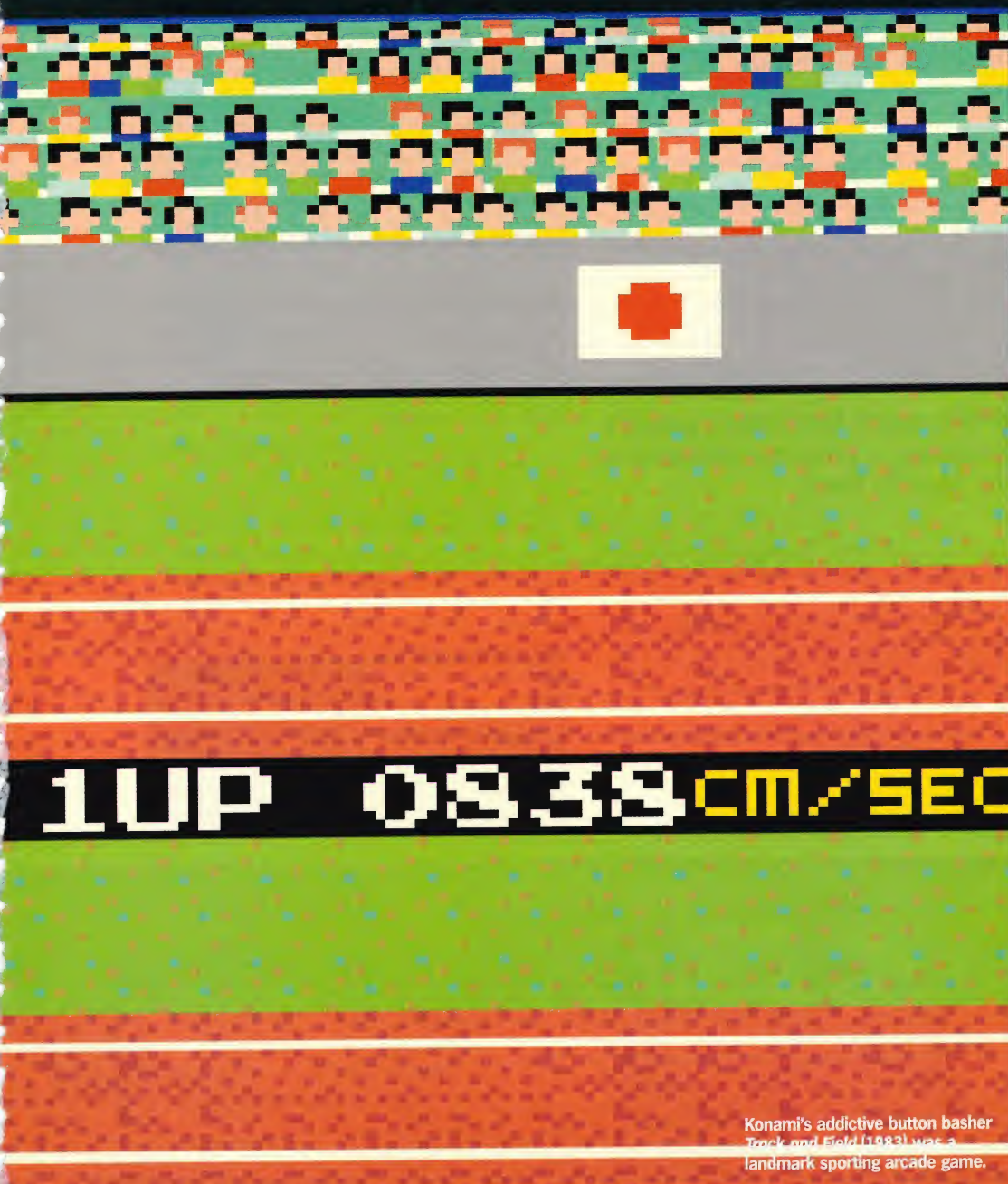
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WORDS: KEITH STUART

REPLAY

From *Pong* to *Pro Evolution Soccer*, the history of the sports simulation is a digital trophy cabinet filled with classic gameplay memories, as well as the odd wooden spoon of failure and runners-up medal of blatant cash-in shame. *OPS2 Specials* dons its tight polyester shorts and takes a stumbling jog down sporting memory lane...



Konami's addictive button basher *Track and Field* (1983) was a landmark sporting arcade game.

The sports sim is the world's oldest computer game genre. It predates the shoot-'em-up, the beat-'em-up, the puzzle game and even the Japanese nude dating simulation. Why did it arrive first? Because all a sports game required an ancient computer to display was two bats and a ball. And the ball didn't even have to be round. Plus, because a sports game can be played between two players, there's no need for computer controlled characters with complex AI routines – you don't get a huge, hideously ugly end-of-level boss in tennis. Unless you include Venus Williams.

THE EARLY YEARS

The sports game is so old in fact, that to find the first example you have to go all the way back to 1958, when an American scientist named William A. Higinbotham attempted to liven up public tours of the Brookhaven National Nuclear Research Laboratory by creating a very simple tennis game using an olde analogue computer and an oscilloscope screen. The kids loved it. Of course, he should have patented the idea immediately, but no, he just sat back, satisfied that he had managed to make a few children interested in science without having to detonate a nuclear device in their faces.

The first proper sport videogame arrived 14 years later when American company Magnavox launched a 'television game' console called the Odyssey. This was a precursor of *Pong* in which two players controlled onscreen bats with rudimentary joypads, knocking a small square ball at each other. The console came complete with several plastic overlays which you taped to your TV screen to mimic tennis courts, volleyball courts, etc, thereby giving you the choice of 12 'different' sports 'games'. Incredibly, 100,000 Odyssey units were sold in the US – catching the imagination of one geeky young entrepreneur named Nolan Bushnell...

A couple of months later, Bushnell set up Atari and designed a *Pong* arcade cabinet. It featured the same bat and ball gameplay as the Odyssey but added scores and a few bleeping sound effects (that is, of course, how the game got its name). After a brief test-run in a nearby bar, Atari started mass-producing the machine, shifting thousands of units to arcade centres around America.

Without a doubt *Pong* marked the beginning of the videogame industry. Dozens of arcade companies, who previously made things like pinball machines and air hockey tables, started producing *Pong* clones to cash in on the craze. The likes of Sega, Taito and Midway all entered the videogame market this way, coming up with their own versions of *Pong* and often simply changing the name of the sport (Sega went for *Hockey*, Taito for *Soccer*).

Later, home consoles like the Atari 2600 (1977) and the Mattel Intellivision (1980) moved the sport simulation a step further with colour graphics and rudimentary sounds. Some titles like Atari's *Football* and *Baseball*, and especially Intellivision's far superior licensed sports games, managed to show stickmen instead of bats, together with pitches and courts with boundaries, lines, goals, etc – a major transition from the abstract world of *Pong* toward the realism of the modern sim. (And a major technical coup considering the Intellivision had about 4k to play with and could only show eight moving objects at once).





It all started with two bats and a ball, courtesy of Pong.



Atari's 720° was the first big extreme sports hit.

THE 8-BIT YEARS: 1982-88

The Commodore 64 with its vast 64k of memory, its powerful SID soundchip and its hardware sprite capabilities opened up many new possibilities for the sports game. The computer was launched in Britain in 1982 and was followed by a cart-based killer app, *International Soccer* by Andrew Spencer. Later came Jon Hare's *Microprose Soccer*, a promising forerunner to his *Sensible Soccer* based (according to Hare) on *Tehkan World Cup*, a classic 1985 coin-op soccer sim with trackball control.

Not to be outdone, the Spectrum produced its own footy star, *Match Day*.

Considering most Speccy sports games at the time were little better than *Pong* variations, the use of vaguely human players was a giant step forward – even though programmer Jon Ritman used bear models from a previous game to create the players, removing their snouts and putting them in footy kits. "My older game *Bear Bower* used the bears but was 2D so I only had animations for walking left and right," Ritman told us, "I had to add animations for the other directions. It's easily seen that in *Match Day* the animations are far more like walking than running."

Over in the arcades, Konami's multiplayer, multi-event sport games *Track and Field* and *Hyper Sports* invented the button basher. To get the athletes to run you had to hit two buttons in succession. Very fast. It was as tiring as real sport but as strangely alluring as Denise Lewis's six-pack, inspiring dozens of home imitations including Activision's



//Jon Ritman used the bear models from a previous game to create the players in Match Day//



Hyper Sports: more button breaking fun from Konami.



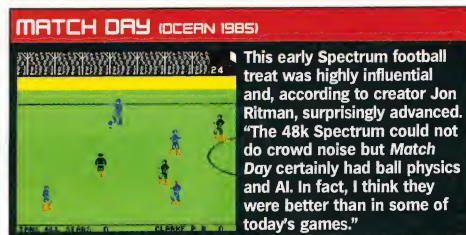
Pitstop II introduced fuel management to the F1 game.

Decathlon and the legendary (though not as good as you remember) *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*.

The best multi-event sports titles were developed by San Francisco-based, Epyx. The company started with 1984's *Summer Games*, bashed out rapidly by a six man team to tie-in with the Olympics. Events included 100m, swimming, pole vaulting, etc, and the eight-player option put it among the very first multiplayer games. The C64 version sold hundreds of thousands of copies and was quickly followed by *Summer Games 2*, *Winter Games*,

World Games and *California Games*. Despite the production line approach, the events were always fun and imaginative (anyone for Canadian log rolling?) and included several clever variations on the standard joystick waggling. In the *Winter Games* triathlon, for example, you had to move the joystick in a slow rhythm for the skiing section, use it as a gun in the shooting section, then waggle like mad for the downhill slopes. Total gameplay.

Epyx also managed to change the F1 simulation forever. At the time, the key F1 game was Namco's legendary arcade smash *Pole Position* (1982), with its pioneering 3D-style 'chase cam' view (abandoning the top-down visuals of the olden days) and use of a real F1 circuit. Suitably



This early Spectrum football treat was highly influential and, according to creator Jon Ritman, surprisingly advanced. "The 48k Spectrum could not do crowd noise but *Match Day* certainly had ball physics and AI. In fact, I think they were better than in some of today's games."

inspired, Epyx produced first the cart-based *Pitstop* then the far superior *Pitstop II* (1984): a split-screen F1 racer that required players to monitor both their fuel level and the state of their tyres, taking regular pit-stops accordingly. This strategic element added a whole new dimension and *Pitstop II* marked the point at which the realistic F1 simulation said goodbye to the arcade racer.

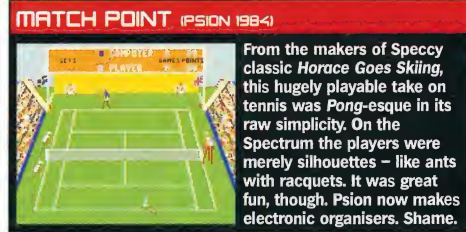
Two years later Access Software created *Leaderboard Golf*, a compelling and surprisingly realistic sim set on a series of island courses. Not only did the game virtually invent the behind-the-golfer 3D view, it also revolutionised the golf control mechanism. To make an accurate swing



The finest title in Epyx's long running multi-event *Games* series, featured old button bashing faves like javelin and triple jump but mixed them with new stuff like the equestrian, fencing and kayaking, all of which used cool variations on the standard joystick waggling.

you had to hit the fire button once for power, and then again – in exactly the right spot – to set the direction. This dual-phases system has dominated golf games ever since. Incidentally, when Access went belly up the programmers behind *Leaderboard*, Bruce and Roger Carver, joined Microsoft to work on its *MS Links* series of realistic golf games which still dominate the sport on PC.

The 8-bit era also saw the rise of the endorsed game (see the boxout below), ranging from the sublime *Frank Bruno's Boxing* (a version of NES classic, *Punch Out*), to the surreal *Peter Shilton's Handball Maradona*. Extreme sports got a look in via skateboarders *720°* (Atari, 1986) and *Skate or Die* (EA, 1988). And, finally, *Konami Soccer* (1985) was released on the MSX, a Japan only home computer. Many see this as the forefather of the all-conquering *ISS* series.



From the makers of Speccy classic *Horace Goes Skiing*, this hugely playable take on tennis was *Pong*-esque in its raw simplicity. On the Spectrum the players were merely silhouettes – like ants with racquets. It was great fun, though. Psion now makes electronic organisers. Shame.

THE TOP TEN MOST INFLUENTIAL ENDORSEMENTS



1. Daley Thompson's Decathlon (1984)

Released by Ocean to coincide with the Los Angeles Olympics (Daley did sales no end of good by snagging the gold), this olde joystick waggler was rough but playable. Undoubtedly sparked the endorsement craze.



2. Frank Bruno's Boxing (1985)

There were other boxing games at the time but Elite's use of the 'behind Frank' view was hugely effective. The panto pugilist took on eight fighters with a variety of punches, and the KO meter was way ahead of its time.



3. Emlyn Hughes International Soccer (1988)

Massively successful player manager title with advanced gameplay features like side-stepping, barging, sliding tackles, etc, and a wealth of tournament options. Plus the gurning ex-Liverpool captain on the box.



4. John Madden Football (1989)

One of the first games where the star name was actually involved in the design process rather than just posing for the ads and cover. NFL legend, Madden apparently helped shape the game's ultra-realism.



5. Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker (1991)

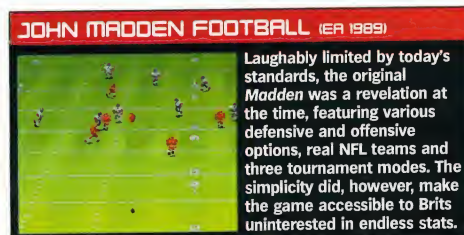
This innovative 3D sim, with its 'push the mouse to play a shot' interface, caught the feel of the game brilliantly. White continues to endorse the series but his input appears confined to cheesy photoshoots.



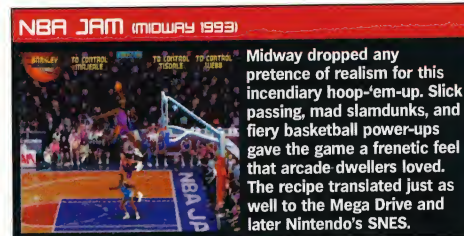
EA launched its FIFA International Soccer cash cow on the Mega Drive.



Geoff Crammond's ground-breaking Amiga game F1 GP put the sim-hungry player directly in the driving seat. Literally.



Laughably limited by today's standards, the original Madden was a revelation at the time, featuring various defensive and offensive options, real NFL teams and three tournament modes. The simplicity did, however, make the game accessible to Brits uninterested in endless stats.



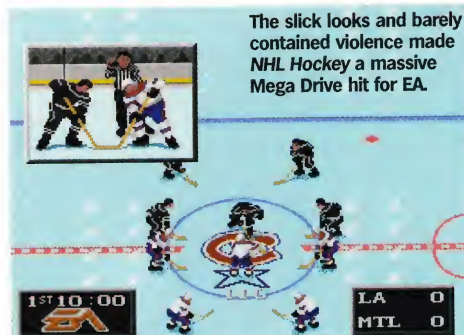
Midway dropped any pretence of realism for this incendiary hoop-'em-up. Slick passing, mad slamdunks, and fiery basketball power-ups gave the game a frenetic feel that arcade dwellers loved. The recipe translated just as well to the Mega Drive and later Nintendo's SNES.

THE 16-BIT YEARS: 1988-94

EA was just a moderately sized publisher when it released *John Madden Football* on the Apple 2 computer in 1989. There are conflicting rumours of how the game came about: some reckon EA's CEO Trip Hawkins cornered ex-gridiron coach turned TV pundit Madden in a parking lot and persuaded him to sign the endorsement; others reckon Hawkins and his team bumped into Madden on a train and forged the idea of a US football simulation with him. Whatever the case, it was EA's first licensed sports title and when translated to the Mega Drive a year later, it was a massive bestseller.

This had several consequences. First, EA woke up to the enormous potential of licensed sports games. Then, when a new version of *Madden* did similar business the following year, EA was also the first company to realise that megabucks could be made out of annually updating franchises with new visuals, players and stats. (At the time, most companies believed that consumers wouldn't fork out for practically the same game every 12 months. Naive fools).

In 1993, EA enlivened sales yet further by securing an NFL licence for its *Madden* series. The licensing rush started. FIFA, NHL, PGA, NASCAR and NBA titles soon followed, and to



The slick looks and barely contained violence made *NHL Hockey* a massive Mega Drive hit for EA.

the franchised sports game, though. Midway's super flashy coin-op hit *NBA Jam* (1993) was the first arcade game to get an official NBA license and exploited it brilliantly with fast-paced, two-on-two gameplay, gag-filled commentary and trendy (at the time) digitised visuals. Incredibly, the coin-op took over one billion dollars in revenue, proving that fun could sometimes win out over realism. Home conversions on the Mega Drive and SNES did big business too, and the slick gameplay spawned subsequent *NBA Hangtime* and *NBA Showtime* titles on various formats.

Meanwhile, back in the UK, the 16-bit era saw the footy game coming of age. In 1988 veteran publisher Anco released *Kick Off* – a rather basic looking top-down title with a garish bright green pitch, no real player names and no weather effects. However, the gameplay was supremely convincing. For the first time the ball didn't stick to the players' feet, instead you had to learn close control, teasing the ball along the pitch. Also, although the game used just one fire button it gave access to a range of passes, shots and lobs all of which could be combined with aftertouch for swerve. A year later *Kick Off 2* improved the formula with speedier gameplay and better aftertouch, and then *Player Manager* added a football management element. Anco appeared to have a footy monopoly.

But then, in 1991, John Hare and Chris Yates of Sensible



Improved the masterful gameplay of the original and added management options plus over 1,500 teams. Says creator Jon Hare, "This open-armed gesture to the world of football has been rewarded with amazingly loyal fans from every corner of the globe". Deservedly so.

cope with the workload EA bought a Canadian developer named Distinctive Software, which previously worked on 8-bit sports games for Accolade. The company's name was changed to EA Sports, staff swelled from 50 to over 300. A sports game factory was born. And it didn't just make EA the world power it is today, EA Sports effectively saved Sega's Mega Drive console – a huge percentage of games sold on the platform were, yes, licensed sports titles.

EA didn't completely dominate the clammy world of



// EA's CEO Trip Hawkins cornered ex-gridiron coach turned TV Pundit John Madden in a parking lot //

physics, swerve and spin. Many sequels have followed.

Later in 1991, another lone programming legend Geoff Crammond – previously responsible for the influential BBC Micro driving sim *Revs* – created *F1 GP* for Microprose. Released on the Amiga, it was the first driving game to attempt a teeth-grindingly accurate simulation of Formula One handling, using engine and speed data from real F1 cars. The game also boasted real teams and circuits, and players were allowed to turn off damage and select driving aids – a vital feature which has since become mandatory in F1 games, as not everyone enjoys hurtling off the road every three seconds.



6. Jonah Lomu Rugby (1997)
Adding Lomu's name to this rugby sim was a wise move by Codemasters. Thanks to his exploits in the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the fearsome New Zealander inspired a huge new wave of interest in the sport. In turn bringing a wider audience to a decent game.



7. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (1999)
A rare occasion in which the sheer quality of a game actually increased the profile of its endorser. However, Hawk's fame among real skaters gave Neversoft's sim (and the PSone) extra kudos with a trendy new audience.



8. Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis (1999)
Namco's use of the tennis temptress in its ace series was pointless gameplay-wise (the cutesy character doesn't look much like her and plays tennis much better) but having Anna on the cover certainly helped sales.



9. Colin McRae Rally (1998)
As with *Jonah Lomu Rugby*, Codies used an established and respected name to lever an unconventional, rather low-profile sport straight into the mainstream market. The increased popularity of rally as both a sport and a videogame is down to this classic.



10. Britney's Dance Beat (2002)
Ahem, well it is about time that 'gyrating provocatively to steamy teen pop' was recognised as a sport. Now we're just waiting patiently for Beyonce's *Bootylicious Bikini Jiggling*. Or failing that, J. Lo's Butt-athon.



Everybody's Golf made the sport so much more appealing to people who don't wear Pringle jumpers and tartan slacks.



International Track and Field: button bashing perfection.



With complex handling physics and accurate courses, F1 was the finest motor sport franchise on PSone.

THE 32/64-BIT YEARS: 1994-99

Sega's 1992 coin-op *Virtua Racing* was one the first driving game to feature true 3D polygon visuals, and its huge success ushered in a new obsession with visual and gameplay realism. The 16-bit machines couldn't handle it but in 1994 the PlayStation and Saturn brought CD-ROM drives and powerful polygon-pushing graphics chips together to give more powerful ammunition to home console sports sim developers.

The spacious storage capacity of the CD, for example,



allowed studios to record thousands of lines of TV-style commentary to accompany their sport titles. In the densely competitive world of the footy game, a war began to sign up the most high-profile names. EA secured the services of John Motson for *FIFA 96*, Gremlin got Barry Davies for

Actua Soccer and *Rage* wrestled Andy Gray into the office for the now forgotten *Striker '96*.

In every other respect, these games were aiming for exactly the same things: smooth animation, multiple camera angles, a broad mix of tournaments, and a range of different moves. Two strong franchises emerged from the maelstrom: Konami's *International Superstar Soccer* (AKA *J-League Winning Eleven*) and EA's *FIFA*: the former boasting smooth, deep gameplay, the latter slick presentation and real player and team names. The battle between these series' for the biggest market share was the classic contest between brains and brawn, personality and looks. Despite the critical plaudits going to *ISS*, the license-heavy *FIFA* titles won time and time again in the sales charts.

Style over substance wasn't always the rule, however. Konami's distinctly scrappy looking *International Track and Field*, was a massive hit, exhuming the manic button bashing gameplay of the company's Eighties athletics coin-ops. While the swimming and running events were pure joystick smashers, hammer throwing, discus and triple jump required deft rhythm and timing. Plus, the multiplayer option and ability to save high scores to memory card



// Despite the plaudits going to *ISS*, the license-heavy *FIFA* titles won time and time again in the charts//

added to the competitive fun. (Saturn owners weren't left out, by the way. Sega provided its own excellent multi-event sports game in the shape of *Decathlete*. The doomed system also had a very good football title in Sega *Worldwide Soccer*).

Meanwhile, the increased use of advanced physics and handling simulations led to an explosion of serious driving games. The simply named *F1*, crafted by Liverpool Developer Bizarre Creations and published by Psygnosis, brought hardcore motor racing to the masses by combining detailed visuals with highly accurate courses (based on blue prints of the real things) and engine data. Later, Codemasters' *Colin McRae Rally* used superbly loose and exciting bump and grind handling to overcome the potentially dull time trial nature of the sport.

However, the 32-bit days weren't all about slavishly adhering to realism and chasing after the big sport licenses. Camelot's *Everybody's Golf* used super-deformed manga art – i.e. cartoon characters with big heads – to give

THE TOP TEN MOST IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES



1. Crowd noise
Kevin Toms' *Football Manager* (1982) was one of the first sport games to attempt a rough approximation of this atmosphere building effect. In 1985, Anirog's *Five-a-Side Football* added a digitised crowd (badly) chanting "Ere we go!"



2. Real teams and players
Audiogenic claims to be the first to have used real team names in a non-management footy sim with Emlyn Hughes' *International Soccer* (1988). Naturally, this added to the realism and competitive atmosphere, rather than just playing as 'the Blue Team'.



3. Aftertouch
The ability to add swerve to a football, hook and slice to a golf swing, or spin to a tennis or snooker ball, brought real depth to the sports sim. Microprose *Soccer*, *Leaderboard Golf* and Activision's *On Court Tennis* (C64, 1984) were early trailblazers.



4. Commentary
Before CD-ROM, speech was limited to short digitised samples in coin-ops like *NBA Jam*. Full commentary in sports games is a weird feature when you think about it: for total realism a sim should only have crowd noise and the shouts of team-mates.



5. TV-style presentation
Along with commentary, elements such as replays, slick presentation and in-game signature tunes gave sport sims the hypnotic glamour of TV sports coverage. CinemaWare's 16-bit title *TV Sports Basketball* (1990) was an early example.



N64 classic 1080° was the first snowboarding game not to be complete rubbish.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY (CODEMASTERS 1998)



This was a seriously uncompromising rally sim. There were no spurious versus races, it's all time trial based and you HAD to listen to your co-driver. But the all-terrain tracks and slick handling ensured mainstream gamers weren't put off by the challenge. Dirty, yet lovely.

the sport a more approachable and friendly look. The gameplay was accessible and accurate and it remains one of the best golf games ever. Similarly Mario Golf and Mario Tennis on the N64, substituted well-known players for funky little Nintendo characters.

Finally, extreme sports suddenly became gaming gold

TONY HAWKS PRO SKATER (ACTIVISION 1999)



The genius of Neversoft's sim was the open gameplay, and the brilliantly exhaustive control system which made grinds, jumps and tricks as numerous, accessible and fun to experiment with as beat-'em-up combos. You could take on the challenges or just skate for hours. Gnarly.

dust in the 32-bit era. Passable snowboarding title Cool Boarders and open-ended, utterly addictive skateboarding romp Tony Hawk's Pro Skater from Neversoft, started the infatuation: In part by tapping in to the music and clothing of the sports and making the games part of the whole lifestyle image. The concept of videogame as fashion accessory was finally born after many a miscarriage.



Anna Kournikova has increased the profile of the Smash Court Tennis series simply by looking sexy on the box. Frankly, who cares if she's ranked 68th in the world? She'll always be our number one...



Image: ©EMPICS



6. The multi-button pad

The SNES and Mega Drive joypads provided several buttons rather than a joystick's twin fire buttons. This opened up specialist moves such as lobs, long passes, short passes, through-balls, tackles, one-tuos, etc. Purists sniff at this addition, though.



7. The MultiTap

Four-player adaptors such as the one released for the SNES to accompany Super Bomberman, and the EA Sports version for the Mega Drive (pictured above) brought the sheer pleasure and hilarity of multiplayer sports gaming to the world.



8. 3D

Early '3D' games like FIFA on 3DO used multiple camera angles but still had sprite players. It wasn't until J-League Winning Eleven (above), FIFA '96 and Actua Soccer in 1995 that polygon players appeared, bringing visual realism to the sim.



9. Motion capture

The use of motion capture equipment to record the movement of real players brought new levels of authenticity to sports game animation. Sheffield's Gremlin Interactive was one of the first developers to exploit this technology in Actua Soccer (above).



10. Voice recognition

In Japan, Taito's PS2 oddity Greatest Striker came with a headset so you could shout orders to your onscreen player. This may be refined in the future so you can call for the ball from team-mates or shout orders to defenders. A bit embarrassing, mind.

BIZARRE SPORTS GAMES



1. Knight Games (1986)

English Software's medieval romp combined the multi-event sports sim with the beat-'em-up to entertaining effect. Events included archery, crossbow, and fighting with swords and quarterstaves. A forerunner to Palace Soft's infamous *Barbarian*.



2. Americas Cup Sailing (1986)

A rare attempt to bring the sheer excitement of round-the-world yacht racing to the videogame [1]. ACS featured three challenge modes and even a two-player option, yet still gamers stayed away in their droves.



3. Brutal Sports (1993)

An enjoyably violent combination of RPG and American football sim for the Amiga and Atari Jaguar. No doubt inspired by the Bitmap Brothers classic future sports game *Speedball* and the ultra geeky D&D-style boardgame *Blood Bowl*.



4. Final Furlong (1997)

Namco's genius multiplayer arcade game required you to sit on a plastic horse and physically jump up and down on it to make the onscreen nag go! There was even a whip button so you could tan its lazy ass. Sadly, there was no console conversion...



5. Libero Grande (1997)

Another Namco oddity, this time a first-person footy sim in which you took control of just one player rather than the entire team. Strangely, it failed to impress gamers unwilling to stand around doing nothing for minutes on end.



The first PS2 instalment of Konami's genre-leading PES series, *Pro Evolution Soccer* is the pinnacle of the football game. For now.



Sega's Dreamcast classic *Virtua Tennis* re-wrote the tennis sim rule book with its gorgeous looks, incredible realism and depth.

128-BIT: 1999-THE PRESENT DAY

In 1998, Sega launched both the 128-bit Dreamcast console and a powerful piece of arcade hardware based on beefed-up Dreamcast specs, named NAOMI which became home to numerous sports stars. The DC boasted super-smooth animation capabilities and detailed 3D modelling, but it led to very few decent sport games. Sega's own *Virtua Tennis* (1999) was an astonishing exception with its intuitive yet ultra-realistic simulation of the sport, and near-photo quality animation. *NFL2K2* and *NBA2K2* from Video Concepts were similarly accomplished, providing stunning visuals and accurate [online] gameplay.

Which leads us to PlayStation 2. Predictably, EA has kept its key franchises rolling along nicely with *NHL 2002*, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002* and the fantastic *Madden NFL 2002* offering totally polished sporting action. And there's been a couple of quality attempts at British sports with *Cricket 2002* and *Rugby*. EA Sports has also extended its range through the BIG! label, which has given us the groovy snowboarding star *SSX Tricky*. Elsewhere, extreme sports are tightening their grip on the genre with the likes of Tony Hawk's *Pro Skater 3*, Dave Mirra *Freestyle BMX 2*, *Splashdown* and the forthcoming *Mat Hoffman Pro BMX 2*. Soon, *Sega Sports Tennis 2K2* will feed our Wimbledon-inspired tennis frenzies. *Pro Evolution Soccer*, meanwhile, rules the footy roost with its breathtakingly authentic simulation (the commentary is still rubbish, though).

The future of the sports simulation is fairly easy to predict. As developers learn to squeeze every last drop of processing juice from the PS2 hardware, animation will improve, physics will become more realistic, AI opponents more challenging (and less predictable), stadiums/tracks/boxing rings more intricate. The prospect of online tournaments is also a realistic one. Imagine 11 British gamers taking on 11 PS2 owners in Argentina at *Pro Evolution 3*. The sports genre will end up as it began, as a brand new multiplayer experience. ■



EA's *Cricket 2002* captures the unique appeal of the summer sport.



SSX Tricky shows that sport games don't have to take themselves seriously to provide brilliant entertainment.

THE BATTLE TO SAVE THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH FOR ONE MAN



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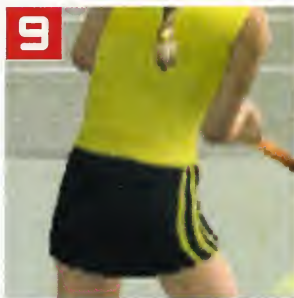
PlayStation.2
THE THIRD PLACE

QUESTIONS OF SPORT

ROUND ONE

PICTURE BOARD

Put name to the faces of the sports stars pictured below.
1 point for each (9 points total).



ROUND TWO

Answer questions on the sports below either attempting the HOME questions (fairly easy) or AWAY (difficult).
1 point for HOME
2 points for AWAY

SPECIALIST SUBJECT REAL SPORTS

FOOTBALL

HOME:

1. Who scored the winning goal for Man Utd in the 1999 European Cup final?
2. Which team holds the record for the number of European Cup victories?

AWAY:

1. Who scored Brazil's final goal in their 4-1 win over Italy in the 1970 World Cup final?
2. Which legendary player holds the England goalscoring record?

OR

GOLF

HOME:

1. What is the golfing term for finishing three under par for the hole?
2. What is Australian golfer Greg Norman's nickname?

AWAY:

1. How many times did Jack Nicklaus win the US Masters title?
2. How old was Tiger Woods when he won his first Major title?

OR

TENNIS

HOME:

1. Which Croatian won the men's Wimbledon Championship in 2001?
2. What surface is the French Open played on?

AWAY:

1. Who defeated Ivan Lendl in the 1986 Wimbledon final?
2. Which female tennis legend holds the record for the number of Wimbledon victories?

OR

MOTOR RACING

HOME:

1. How many World Championships wins did Ayrton Senna achieve?
2. What car does Colin McRae drive in the World Rally Championship?

AWAY:

1. Which British rider is the most successful in Superbike history?
2. Which Formula One driver holds the record for the number of Grand Prix wins?

OR

BOXING

HOME:

1. Who did Muhammad Ali fight in the classic Thrilla in Manila?
2. What was the nickname of Middleweight star Thomas Hearns?

AWAY:

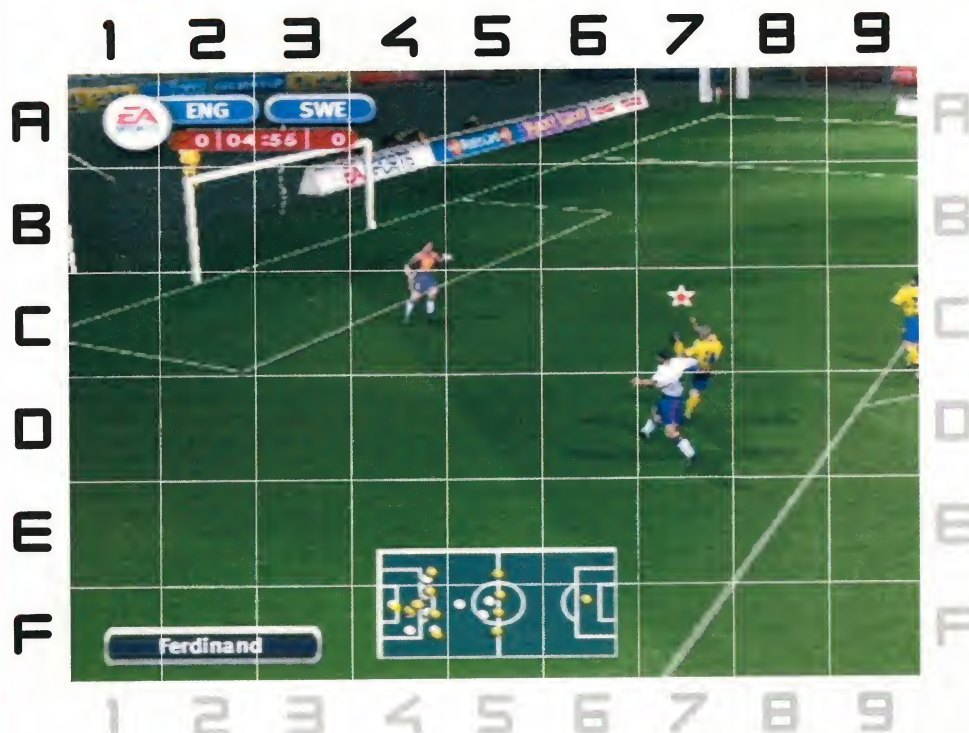
1. How old was Tyson when he won his first World Heavyweight title?
2. Which boxer did Robert De Niro portray in Raging Bull?

OR

ROUND FOUR

SPOT-THE-BALL

Using your skill, judgement and knowledge of videogame football, identify the position of the ball in this screenshot.
5 points for choosing the correct square (D-2, for example).



ROUND THREE

Answer questions on these sports game genres, either trying the HOME questions (fairly easy) or AWAY (difficult).
1 point for HOME
2 points for AWAY

SPECIALIST SUBJECT SPORTS GAMES

FOOTBALL

HOME:

1. What is the title of Pro Evolution Soccer in its native Japan?
2. Who endorses the upcoming PS2 footy game developed by Rage?

OR

AWAY:

1. What was the title of the first football game developed by Sensible Software?
2. Which famous Spectrum footy title was created by John Ritman?

GOLF

HOME:

1. Name the man who currently endorses EA Sport's PGA Tour series.
2. What is the title of the smash hit PSone cartoon golf game developed by Camelot?

OR

AWAY:

1. What is the name of Access Software's Influential C64 golf series?
2. True or False: Sensible Software released a golfing spin-off of their Sensible Soccer?

TENNIS

HOME:

1. Which sexy Russian tennis star appears in Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament?
2. Name the amazing Dreamcast tennis game developed by Hitmaker?

OR

AWAY:

1. What was the title of the unusual Amiga tennis game developed by Sensible Software?
2. Who released C64 tennis classic Match Point?

MOTOR RACING

HOME:

1. Which motor sport are Richard Burns and Carlos Sainz associated with?
2. Which legendary C64 F1 racer first introduced refuelling and maintenance features?

OR

AWAY:

1. Name the classic C64 motorbike racer developed by Epyx?
2. Which Namco coin-op racing game was the first to have a steering wheel on its cabinet?

BOXING

HOME:

1. Which heavyweight fighter endorses Codemasters' PS2 boxing game?
2. What is the name of EA Sports' boxing game?

OR

AWAY:

1. Which game was the 8-bit hit Frank Bruno's Boxing based on?
2. And can you name the developer of Frank Bruno's Boxing?

ROUND FIVE

MYSTERY GUEST

Guess the identity of this famous sports personality.
5 points for the correct answer.



ROUND SIX

MATCH-MIX-UP

Study the 2 pictures below and identify the 4 games that have been mixed up.
2 points for each correctly identified game (8 points total).



FINAL ROUND

QUICK-FIRE

Answer all the questions below. They cover a variety of different sports and sports games.
1 point for each correct answer and minus 1 point for every incorrect answer [14 points total].

REAL SPORTS QUESTIONS

- Which Premiership team plays at the Stadium Of Light?
- Who is the current 200-metre sprint world record holder?
- Which Irish jump jockey recently broke the record for the number of wins in a season?
- Who scored England's second goal in the 1966 World Cup final?
- Which legendary fighter was known as the 'Golden Bear'?
- Who did Muhammad Ali fight in the Rumble In the Jungle?
- Which European country is hosting the 2006 World Cup?



SPORTS GAMES QUESTIONS

- Dino Dini developed which classic 16-bit football game?
- Who endorsed Namco's *Smash Court Tennis* on PSone?
- ISS is the name of Konami's famous, long-running football series. What does it stand for?
- What is the title of Namco's coin-op horse racing game?
- Which extreme sports star gives his name to Acclaim's BMX game?
- When was the original Colin McRae Rally title released on PSone?
- Fill in the title of this bizarre 8-bit football game: *Peter Shilton's Handball*



THE ANSWERS (USE A MIRROR TO READ 'EM)

- REAL SPORTS QUESTIONS**
- Sheff Weds
 - Justin Gatlin
 - Paul Hanlon
 - Alan Shearer
 - Muhammad Ali
 - George Foreman
 - Germany
- SPORTS GAMES QUESTIONS**
- Football Manager
 - David Beckham
 - International Superstar Soccer
 - International Superstar Soccer
 - Colin McRae Rally
 - 1997
 - Handball

- YOUR RATING**
- 68-81 Muhammad Ali
 - 51-67 Tony Hawk
 - 34-50 Tim Henman
 - 17-33 Frank Bruno
 - 0-16 Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards



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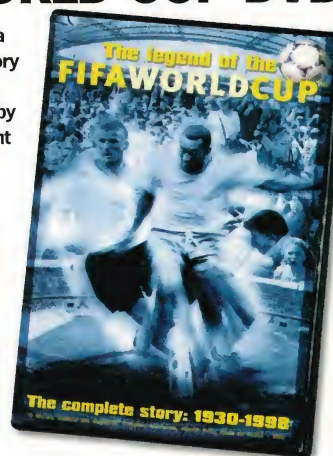
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Or simply email your answers to us at PS2@futurenet.co.uk
with the subject marked 'World Cup Competition.'
See right for all the competition rules.

The *Legend of the FIFA World Cup* is a superb documentary tracing the history of the planet's greatest sporting showcase from its invention in 1930 by visionary Frenchman Jules Rimet, right up to France's triumph in 1998.

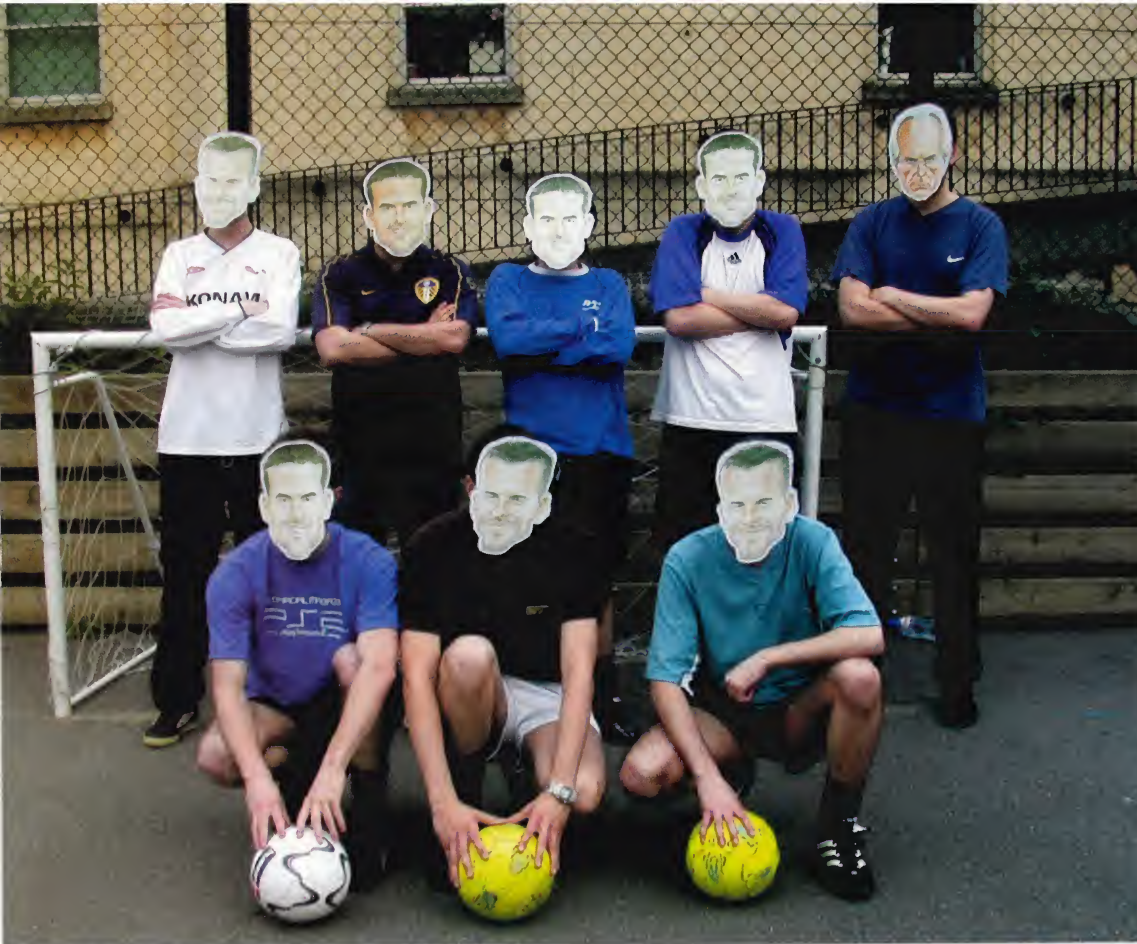
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BUILD IT LIKE BECKHAM...

Making your World Cup mask couldn't be easier! You'll need a piece of card (perhaps from a cereal box), a Pritt Stick (or similar paper adhesive), a pair of scissors, elastic and a stapler.



1. Stick it on

Cut out/remove the page containing the football face that you want to wear, then stick it firmly to your piece of card with the Pritt Stick.



2. Cut it out

Carefully cut around the edge with scissors or a craft knife, following the outline and the shape of the hairstyles. If you want eye holes just push your scissors through the masks and trim a small hole.



3. String it up

Take approximately 30cm of elastic (you can get it from Woolies, any haberdashery or your mum's knickers) and staple one end to each of your mask's ears.



4. Off you go

Your mask is now ready to wear, simply put it over your face and, hey presto, you're an England legend! Now sit in front of the TV and watch the World Cup in style.



PROFILE

Name: David Beckham

Age: 27

Job: Manchester United and England midfield maestro.

Characteristics: Fashion-conscious pretty boy turned national hero with real on-pitch grit and a right foot like a missile launcher.

Catchphrase: "I don't know, what do you think Victoria?"

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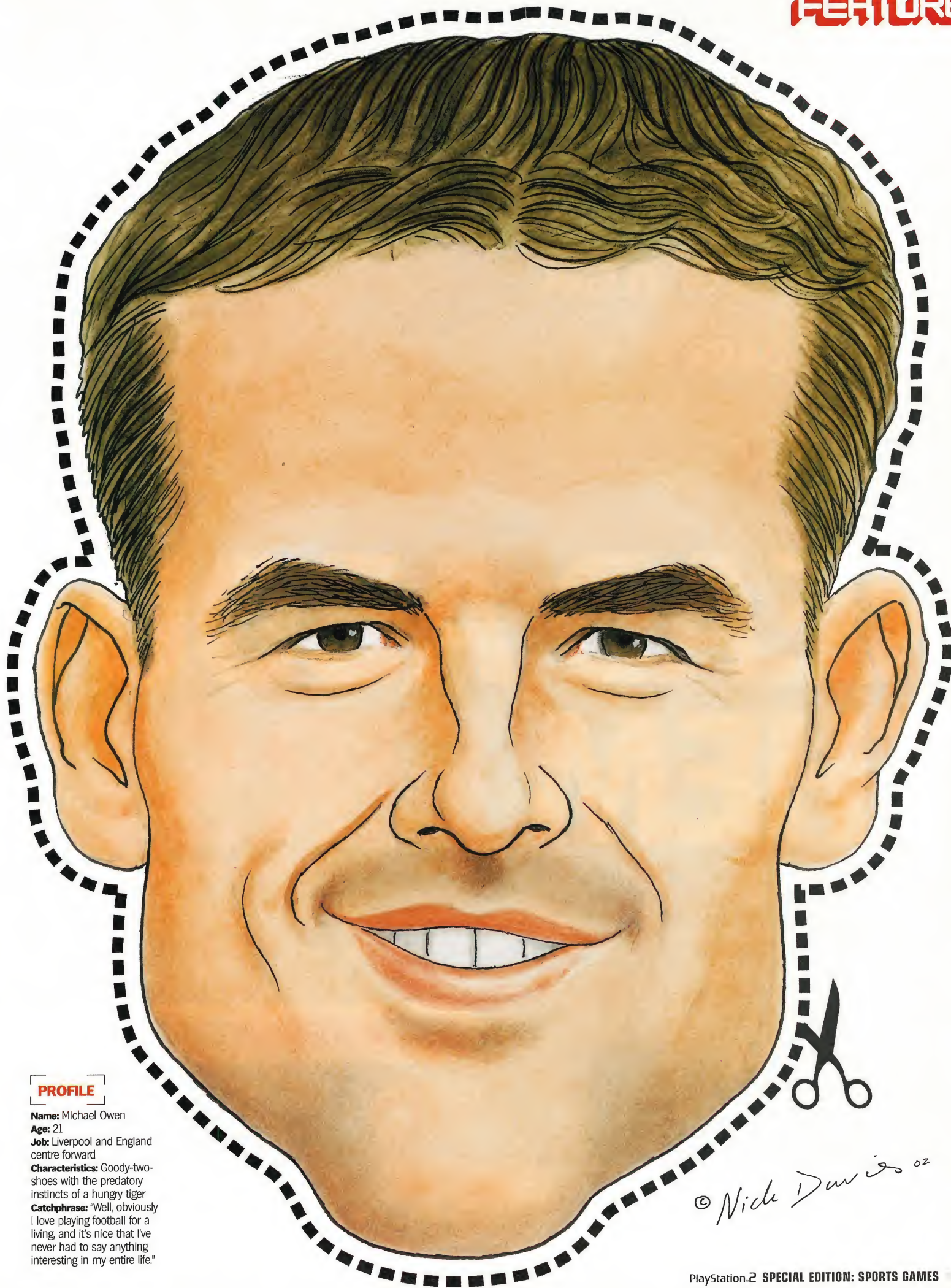
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Over 220 games reviewed!
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PROFILE

Name: Michael Owen

Age: 21

Job: Liverpool and England
centre forward

Characteristics: Goody-two-
shoes with the predatory
instincts of a hungry tiger

Catchphrase: "Well, obviously
I love playing football for a
living, and it's nice that I've
never had to say anything
interesting in my entire life."

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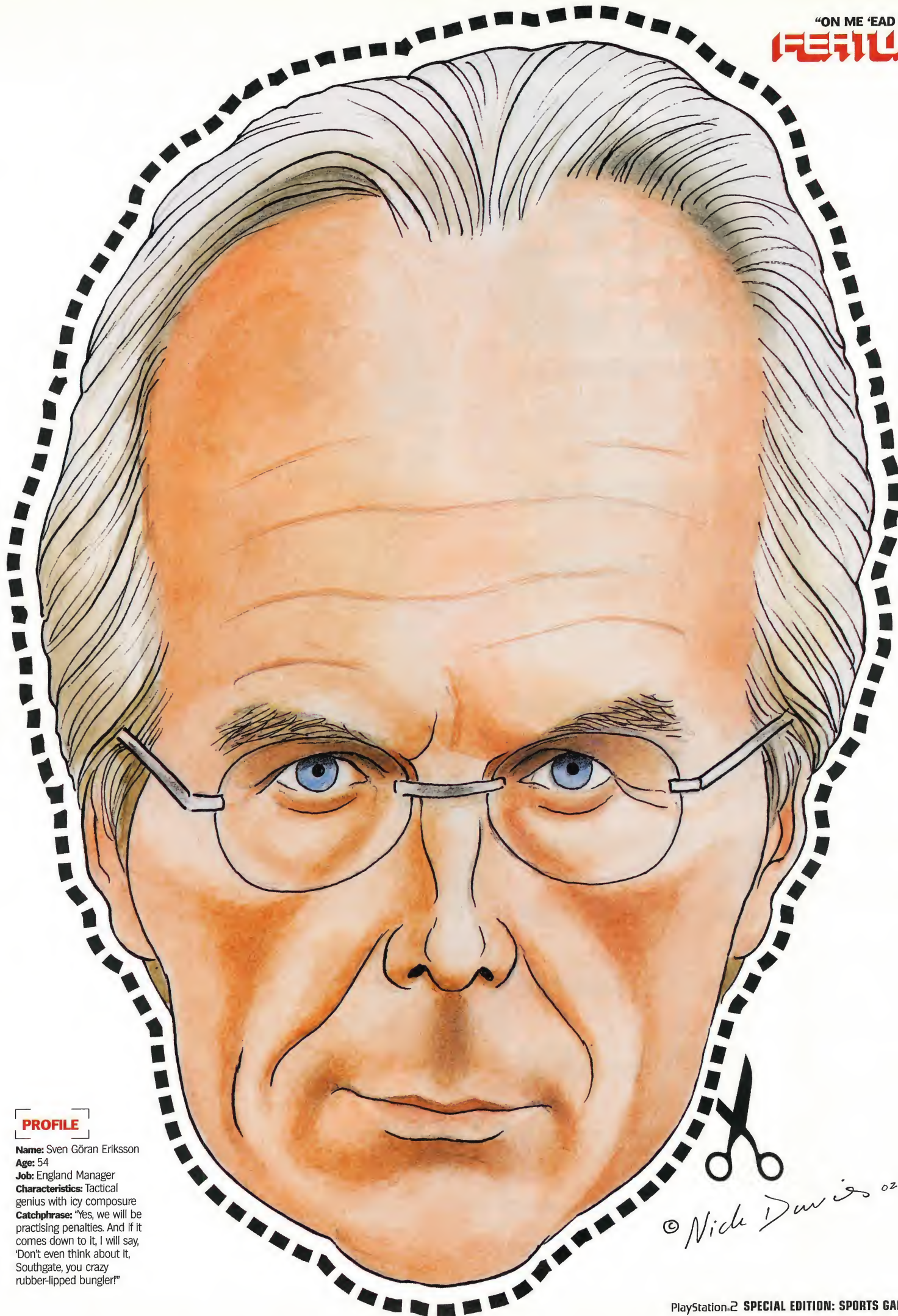
PSM2

PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

XGAMER

 **PlayStation**
Magazine

EDGE



PROFILE

Name: Sven Göran Eriksson

Age: 54

Job: England Manager

Characteristics: Tactical genius with icy composure

Catchphrase: "Yes, we will be practising penalties. And if it comes down to it, I will say, 'Don't even think about it, Southgate, you crazy rubber-lipped bungler!'"



QUICK SEARCH

Looking for that essential sports sim purchase of the future? Not sure where your next driving sim buck is going? Saving up for the best footy action available? Check out our carefully selected highlights on the packed PS2 sporting calendar.

P 097 DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER



Now YOU can be the England captain and Man Utd star without the galling inconvenience of being married to Posh.

P 098 PREMIER MANAGER 2002



Approachable management fun with unique conversational gameplay style instead of endless stats.

P 099 SEGA SPORTS TENNIS 2K2



A feature-packed sequel to Sega's *Virtua Tennis*: the most realistic and playable tennis game ever made.

P 100 TOCA RACE DRIVER



The ultra-realistic touring car racer returns with a brilliant damage feature and typically challenging handling.

P 104 COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3



The danger-courting rally legend is skidding PS2's way. He takes us for a drive then chats us up in the back seat.

P 108 V-RALLY 3



The long-running rally series is back for some graphically impressive PS2 racing boasting loads of new features.

P 109 RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP



And yet more rally action, this time from SCI. This time it's fully licensed sim fun with more cars than anyone else.

P 110 FREEKSTYLE



Fantasy dirt bike game that skillfully combines the gravity defying thrills of SSX with, erm, dirt biking!

P 112 MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2



Are you too big for your BMX now? Feel silly going down the shops on it? Throw it away and let Mat do the work!

P 114 LE TOUR DE FRANCE




All the excitement and gruelling challenge of the world's toughest cycling event but with none of the doping scandals.



DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

Beckham's used to last-minute winners, but can his game steal the PS2 football cup from PES, or will it be a mere broken metatarsal on the foot of soccer simulation?

■ Publisher: **Rage** ■ Players: **1-4**
■ Developer: **Rage** ■ Release: **June**

 The use of a figurehead license can often hide a disappointing game. Call us cynics, but it's not unknown for a company to attempt to shift more units of a dull title by slapping a recognisable face on the cover art. But amid rumours of multi-million pound deals and high-profile adverts, *David Beckham Soccer* could well be the best use of an official license for quite some time.

While the football itself will never rival *Pro Evolution Soccer* for playability, there are some neat differences. As you'd expect, the trademark Beckham set pieces play an important role, with free kicks, goal kicks and corners working in an original and well-designed way. Instead of hoof and hope, you have a choice of three players to punt to, each one highlighted by an arrow showing their direction of movement. Kicking the ball directly into the path of a team-mate is surprisingly satisfying – as is curling in a 30-yard screamer.

Much has been made of DBS's Train Like Beckham mode. Given a series of challenges (free kicks, crossing, etc) your objective is to complete them to gain access to the next batch. Although they rarely progress beyond the conventional, they're a great set of mini-games – however, they would have been even more enjoyable if they featured some sampled speech from Beckham himself, rather than just a small text comment at the end of each challenge. Other notable extras include a biography and interview with Beckham. There's also a series of arcade-style games in which you can recreate some classic recent England matches, and a Survival mode which, as the name implies, allows you to play against a series of increasingly tough opponents until you're eventually knocked out.

So far so sleek, but like an Argentinian stud on a weak metatarsal, there's trouble ahead. The only real name in the game is Beckham's and joining him in the England line-up are old favourites Seeman and Owlin. Okay so maybe we're nit-picking here, but after the license privileges of FIFA, we've come to expect *real* names and player likenesses – frankly, seeing Heski score or Cambel make a tackle feels a little flat. Other irritating gripes include the fact that the goalkeepers are super-human and that you can often run straight through from the halfway line without any serious intervention from your opponent. Both of these are familiar faults in all footy games, but Rage still just has time to tweak the game balance to iron them out.

David Beckham Soccer isn't likely to overtake PES in our affections but it certainly ranks favourably compared to the other football hopefuls on the market. With its intelligence use of the Becks license and quality selection of game modes, Rage's game could well be challenging FIFA, UEFA, and the rest for the runners-up spot at the top of the PS2 football league. ■

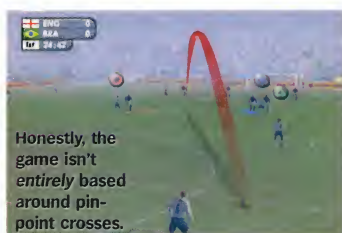


Gameplay is generally slick and pleasingly realistic.

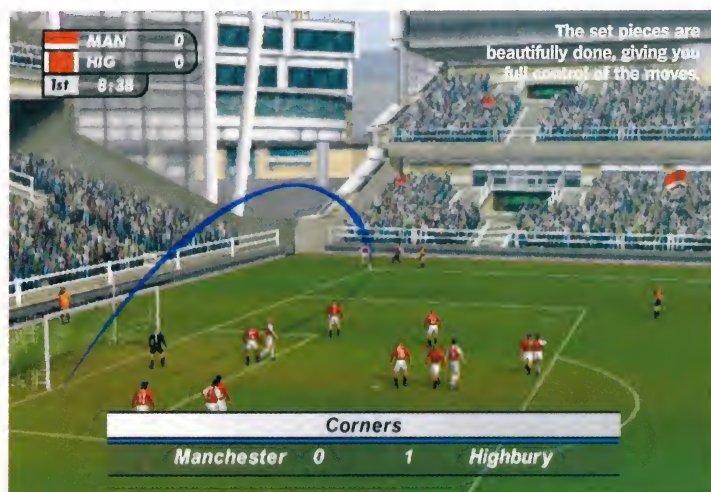
//The trademark Beckham set pieces play an important role and they work in an original and well-designed way//



Press the corresponding button to pass to a team-mate.



Honestly, the game isn't entirely based around pin-point crosses.



The set pieces are beautifully done, giving you full control of the moves.

Corners

Manchester 0 1 Highbury



Encouragement and criticism comes directly from the man himself.



GO TO

"Over 'ere son, on me 'ead!"

Get your free cut-out-and-keep masks of Becks, Owen and Sven!

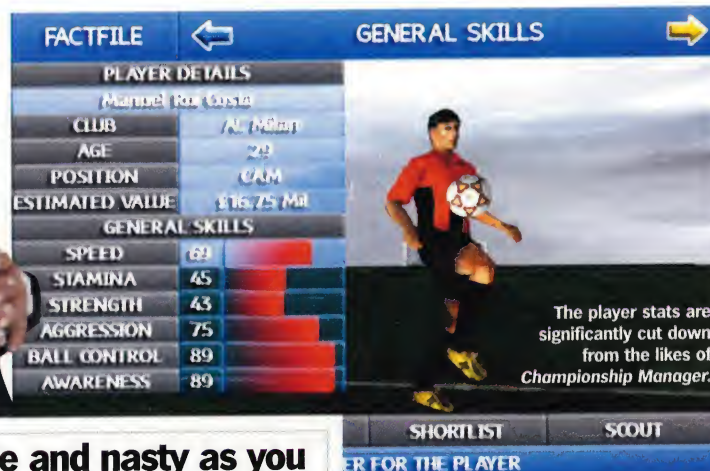
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Here you need to curl the ball around the wall and into the highlighted section of the goal. Just like, erm, Beckham!

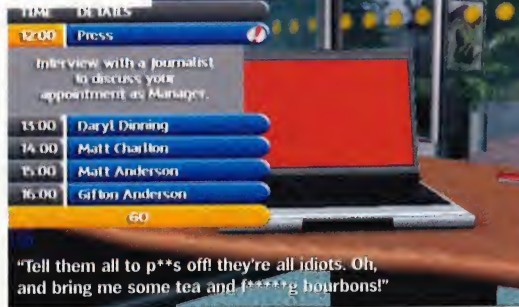


PREMIER MANAGER 2002

Inscrutable chairmen, bolshy agents, sulky strikers. Better warm up that teacup-throwing arm...



// "You can be as rude and nasty as you like. But, as in reality, you have to keep backing it up on the pitch" //



■ Publisher: Infogrames ■ Players: 1
■ Developer: Runecraft ■ Release: May



The trouble with most football management sims? Too cold, too statty. Too many numbers, not enough faces. When the folks at Runecraft sat down to plan their PS2 version of Premier Manager, they had two big decisions to make: A) how much match action to show, and B) how to make the game feel more like a 'real' manager's day-to-day experience and less like the chin-stroking tinkering of a guy sat behind a spreadsheet.

"We wanted to give it a bit of warmth," says Senior Producer, Phil Bradley. "It had to be both accessible for console gamers who might not be huge football fans, while providing a lighter option for the hardcore Championship Manager types." As a result, Premier Manager feels more like a resource management game than an out-and-out football sim. After all, that's closer to the real thing – admin-juggling, trying to keep the board, players and media happy while hammering out success on the pitch.

Entry level is variable. You can choose to sit in the hotseat at a top Premier League club or go for an earthier experience at one of the lower league heartlands. Each presents a sharply different challenge. The Arsenal/Man Utd/Liverpool boards will expect some degree of rapid success, preferably of the polishable variety, while the Port Vale bigwigs will be looking for a steadier rise, with plenty of deft debt management.

Whichever end of the league you choose, the interface has been built around face-to-face encounters with key people at the club. Your secretary will arrange meetings, keeping your schedule ticking over. The commercial manager will key you in to any offers of foreign TV rights, money-spinners and so on while your beloved chairman will be forever at your call.

"Everything you do has an effect somewhere else in the game," explains Bradley. "We've tried to be as flexible as possible so that the player can find his own style. You can be involved in as much or as little as you want. You can be rude, skipping meetings and just concentrating on the football. But unless the goals are going in, the whispers will start and you'll quickly lose the affection of the chairman."

On the match action front, Runecraft has gone for a table football look that often cuts to more representative 3D highlights. With over 350 highlight cut-scenes, the repetition factor is kept in check.

The worry is that the visual approach might suck all the depth out of the game, but Bradley insists the complexity is just well disguised. "You're working through a 25-year career measured by results, awards and trophies. Performance on the pitch is closely linked to your man-management abilities. The conversation-based approach is just more fun – you can be as rude and nasty as you like. But, as in reality, you have to keep backing it up on the pitch." ■

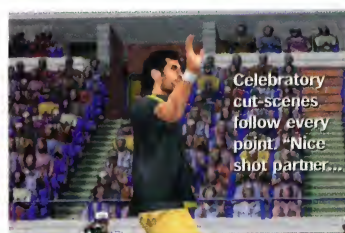
SEGA SPORTS TENNIS 2K2

New shots, new championship mode, new animation and – Mmm! – new ladies. Sega ups the tennis ante with its gorgeous game, set and match-winning sequel.

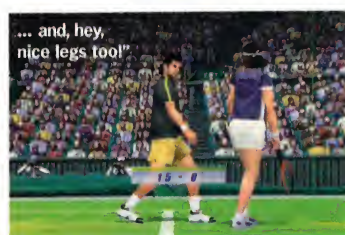


The visuals and animation are of a peerless standard.

//You can perform amazing Boris Becker-esque leaps and dives to keep the ball in the court//



Celebratory cut-scenes follow every point. "Nice shot partner..."



... and, hey, nice legs too!"



Four-player doubles is just about the best multiplayer gaming fun you can have.



GO TO
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament
Check out our in-depth review of PS2's current tennis champ.

PAGE 70



Some mini-games are surreal. It's board-game Othello but with tennis!



Kill! Kill, the evil robot tennis ball servers!

- Publisher: SCEE
- Developer: Sega/Hitmaker
- Release: June
- Players: 1-4



Despite the fact that most of us only watch the sport for two weeks every year (and that's just to catch a glimpse of

Anna Kournikova's pants), tennis sims always go down a treat with their fast, hair-trigger gameplay and fun-for-all accessibility. Sega's arcade and Dreamcast title *Virtua Tennis* was arguably the best ever, boasting sublime, realistic gameplay, eight male players plucked from the real sport and a brilliant Championship mode filled with challenging mini-games. And it only used two buttons – lob and shot – proving that it isn't necessary to make us learn multiple combos in order to get a small furry ball across a net.

Having said that, the sequel adds a touch more complexity to the control system. You can now put top or back spin on your shot and hit a more refined lob, so games are a touch more tactical from the outset. Sega also claims that refinements have been made to the passing shots and drop shots, making both easier to tease from the control set-up: a welcome addition. Player movement has been improved, too, so you can perform amazing Boris Becker-esque leaps and dives to keep the ball in court.

Most obviously though, Sega has added eight female players to the previously all-male roster. Representing da ladies are the likes of Monica Seles, the Williams sisters and Lindsay Davenport. And this isn't just a nice cosmetic touch, it opens up the possibility of four-player mixed doubles matches where gamers will have to keep the relative strengths and weaknesses of the sexes in mind. Sadly there's no Kournikova – the minx is licensed to Namco's *Smash Court Tennis*.

Veterans of the first game will be overjoyed with the rebuilt Championship mode. In the first game this was just a series of unrelated mini-games, used to open up new courts and players. Here you actually create your own player then guide him or her through a whole season, gaining access to new, tougher competitions as you get more experience. The classic mini-challenges have been brought back and re-thought, adding variations on the familiar 'knock over the bowling pins' and 'smack the enormous bouncing balls out of the court' themes.

On top of all this, Sega's Hitmaker team has added to the visual sheen, offering new surfaces and beautifully realised stadiums as well as packaging the experience in slick US TV sports show presentation. Going up against the more familiar *Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament* might mean this gem gets shouldered out a little, especially in the hype-filled run up to Wimbledon. But as the victory of Ivanisevic proved at last year's event, it's not always the biggest names that play the best game. ■



■ Publisher: Codemasters ■ Players: 1-4
■ Developer: Codemasters ■ Release: June



Developing a new racer in Codemasters' TOCA franchise can't be easy. With the series' 1997 debut making the PSone

work its binary socks off to push out unprecedented realism in physics, crash damage, sound and sheer attention to detail, it made the task of improving on the experience no mean feat. Still, Codies did it. Twice in fact, and each time refined the supremely visceral core racer with layer upon layer of new detail and functionality.

And now, TOCA is preparing to begin a brand new season on PS2. What's next? How can the developer meaningfully improve on a series that was damn near unbeatable from the get go? Well, to paraphrase the immortal words of budget crooner/raconteur Max Bygraves, they 'wanna tell you a story'. That's right, TOCA has been seizing the jangling nerves and synapses of race fans for years, so now Codemasters wants your heart involved, too. And it's aiming to do it in a fully-fledged, blockbuster-style narrative that will shift emphasis from the cars to their drivers. Sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin.

The back story is the stuff of solid gold Tinseltown angst (and, as such, the following is greatly enhanced by reading in a gruff, movie trailer voice). Ryan McKane is a Touring Car test driver and younger brother to Daddy's favourite son and superstar TOCA driver, Donnie. Kyle McKane, his dad is a veteran race driver himself. Yet caught between his father's name and Donnie's seemingly limitless success, Ryan is going nowhere fast. But when Kyle dies in a spectacular crash, Ryan's grief turns into naked ambition. He's going to be the best damn TOCA driver in the world. Yes! Somehow, Ryan McKane is going to make his daddy proud! And cut.

The narrative seems cheesy but the theory is sound. With judicious use of cut-scenes (none longer than 45 seconds) and a carefully designed, context-based front end (see On The Menu) the developer aims to put emotive flesh on the bones of the game. Nobody, with the possible exception of Michael Knight, can say they've ever been dissed by a car. But put an arch rival at the wheel of said car and put it in front of you with one lap of Holland's Zandvoort track remaining before the chequered flag, and it's a different kettle of bolts entirely.

DRIVING AMBITIONS

To this end, the traditionally abstract menu screens have been given the heave-ho in favour of locations in the professional life of our hero and your in-game persona, Ryan McKane. The main menu is Ryan's office, complete with interactive PC (for email race offers/Career mode), filing cabinet (Options), Wall Chart (info on rivals worldwide) and a door leading to the relaxation room. In there you'll find

TOCA RACE DRIVER

Codemasters mixes ultra-realistic racing sim with a Hollywood rags-to-riches blockbuster story in this hugely promising genre-tweaking oddity.



//Nobody, with the possible exception of Michael Knight, can say they've ever been dissed by a car//



Multiplayer, Time Trial, and Free Ride modes, and so it continues. If this sounds at all reminiscent of the method that EA LA employed to heap instant atmosphere onto the *Medal Of Honor* games' front ends, you'd be right. Indeed, Codemasters' Studio Head, Gavin Raeburn has cited the WWII games' ability to conjure an involving ambience as an unusual source of inspiration for *Race Driver*'s narrative.

The contextualisation of the menus works just as well here. As for the cut-scene-assisted narrative? Unfortunately, the Career mode was not implemented in the version we played, so how effective the FMVs are in practice is yet to be seen. One thing is certain, by motion capturing entire scenes with actors speaking their dialogue together – as opposed to motion-capturing individuals, making a composite scene after the event and then dubbing in dialogue – the end result will be as naturalistic as current technology can afford.

But enough of narrative, context and method MoCap. What is this? A racing game or a Merchant Ivory film? Impatient race fans can relax (Merchant Ivory fans, you're in the wrong mag). It's a relief to be able to say that an unfortunate baby/bath water scenario has been avoided and *TOCA Race Driver* is very much its parents' child.

Every one of the game's 38 international tracks has been lovingly recreated from official – and therefore expensive to obtain – statistics. Likewise, each of the 40-plus unlockable cars from the Rover MG ZS to the *Dukes Of Hazzard*'s pride and joy (the gorgeously throaty '69 Dodge Charger), has been created with utmost realism. That includes recording the cars' engine sounds at source, naturally. It wouldn't be *TOCA* without realistic damage and *Race Driver* is not set to disappoint. The game borrows a system used in official crash tests called FEM (for Finite Element Modelling) to recreate automotive bruising and chafing with incredible detail. And since each race can have up to 13 challengers

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE

True to the *TOCA* series, *Race Driver* goes to extraordinary lengths to show damage accrued by you and other drivers during races. Fenders bend, windows shatter, and sections of bodywork get distorted and eventually fall off. The more scrapes you get, the worse your car is going to handle.



1. TOCA rule #1 – learn the tracks. Slam the barrier and this is the result.

2. A little first corner jostling... Might get a scratch, but it can be fixed.

3. TOCA's handling can be feisty at first. Just stay on the track. Okay?

4. What happens if you don't at least try to brake and steer.



TOCA features the most realistic damage modelling around.

//Learning the handling characteristics of your car and knowing every turn of each track is essential//

DRIVE TIME

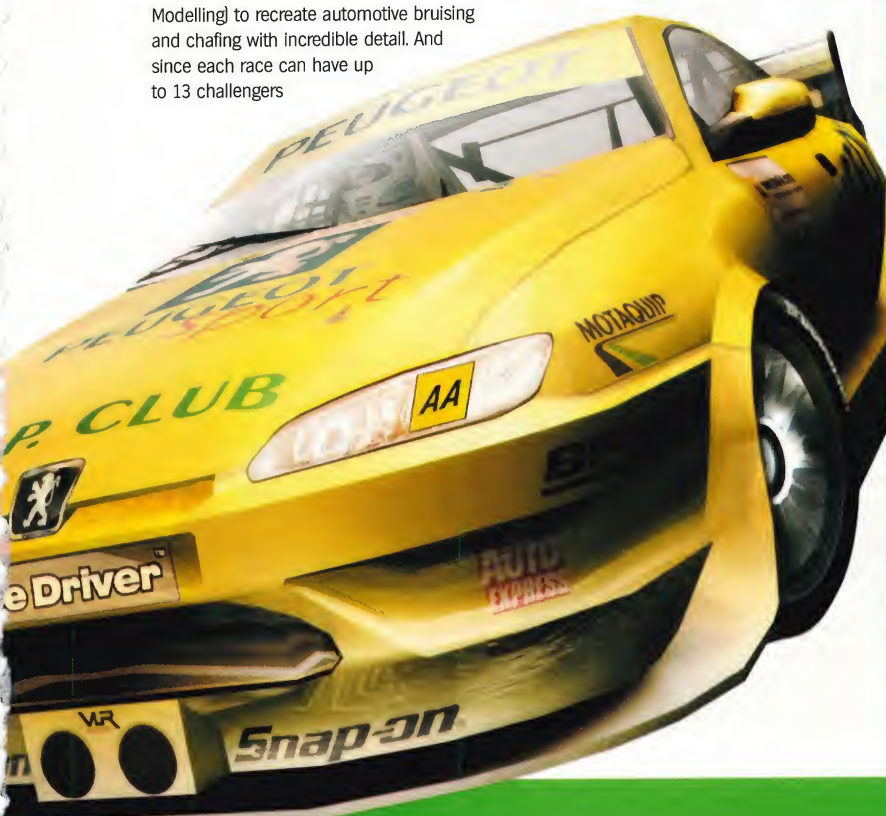
With a few cars still to be confirmed, here's what you can expect to drive... but only if you're good enough, of course.

AC Cobra 212 S-C
AC Cobra Mk4 CRS
Alfa Romeo 147
Alfa Romeo GTV
Chevrolet Cavalier Z24 Coupé
Chevrolet Corvette Z06
Chevrolet Monte Carlo with Stock Car Body Kit
Chrysler Eagle Talon (Turbo)
Dodge Charger
Dodge Neon Highline Sedan GT-R
Dodge Viper GTS-R
DPRS T-230
Holden Commodore SS (VX)
Koenig C62
Lexus IS200
Lotus Sport Elise
Marcos Mantis GT3
MG ZS
MG Lola Le Mans
Mini Cooper S
Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VI GSR
Mitsubishi Mirage
Nissan Skyline GT-R R34
Opel Astra Coupé
Peugeot 406 Coupé
Proton Satria GTi
Saab 95 Aero
Subaru Impreza WRX Type-R STi Version 6
Toyota Chaser 2.0
Toyota GTi
Toyota Supra Mk4 93-98 Turbo
TVR Tuscan Challenge
TVR Tuscan R
TVR Cerbera Speed 12
Vauxhall Astra Coupé

cutting you up at every turn, the chances are you'll get to see just how good it is many, many times. Windows shatter, bumpers get ripped off, body panels dent and shred. It's very impressive. Equally impressive is the way damage has a direct and proportional effect on your car's performance. Still, with a bit of luck you'll have caused a pile-up big enough to ensure that you won't be the only one driving around in what looks like a knackered clown's car.

Cars and tracks become available as you make your non-linear way through the Career mode's 13 championships. These are a mixture of officially licensed events like the British and German Touring Car Championships and composite, fictitious tournaments that pick and choose from the world's most challenging circuits. All in the name of racing pleasure.

With no option to provide difficulty settings, *Race Driver* is firmly parked in the simulation camp. Learning the handling characteristics of your car and knowing every turn of each track before you challenge new opponents is essential if you're ever going to come out on top. And although successful powersliding is a feature of the game, it's a hard-won joy



rather than a lazily done deal. In short, ploughing gung-ho into races will have you limping out of sand traps with missing (car) body parts again and again. This is a racer where there's no substitute for genuine skill, something that you can nurture happily, chasing your previous lap's ghost car around the tracks in the Time Trial mode. Or, failing that, practice against up to three other players in the Multiplayer mode.

Then there's race preparation. Should you want to tweak your chosen car's performance, you won't be disappointed with *Race Driver*. Aside from the cosmetic concerns of the car's livery, you can make significant changes to gears, downforce, suspension, anti-roll, tyres and brake bias. And when you're done, you can take your mechanically engineered monster out for a pre-race test drive.

With the game approximately forty percent complete, there's still a fair amount to be implemented, not least with the FMV and graphical flourishes that should make the finished game shine. However, the core racing is there now and is as satisfyingly challenging and edgy as you'd hope. If the story element does its job and gives *TOCA*'s continuing commitment to realism and unbridled options a human face, then petrolheads are going to be in for a unique treat. It's a cliffhanger worthy of Hollywood. And we can hardly wait. ■



ON THE MENU

It's all about atmosphere. Instead of the customary, abstract menus that grace the majority of racing games, *TOCA Race Driver* lets you move between locations in hero Ryan McKane's world. For example...



1. Driver HQ

This is where you mastermind your ascent through the Touring Car championships. See the guy reclining in the chair? That's you, that is.

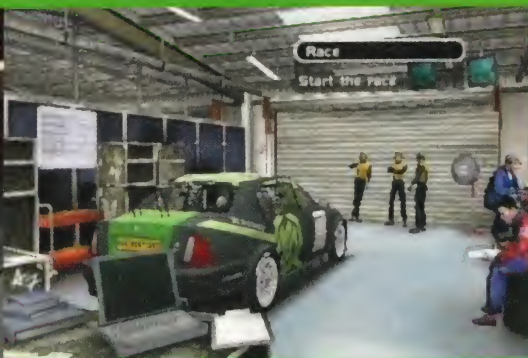
2. Free Race Area

A place to chill, but also where you sort out multiplayer races, time trials and who knows, maybe hook yourself up with a can of pop.



3. The Key Cupboard

Here's where you choose your ride for the race ahead. Move between key rings and they'll swing to and for. It's a small touch but a pleasing one all the same.



4. The Garage

You've chosen your car and here it is. While you take a seat, the tech bods start getting it prepped to race. Head to the clipboard and you can alter all sorts of your car's components.



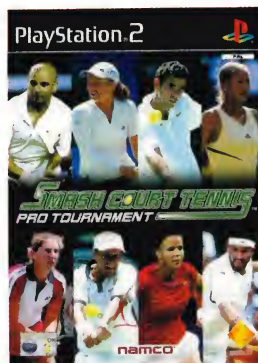
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FRONTLINE



STAR WARS:
JEDI STARFIGHTER



SMASH COURT TENNIS
PRO TOURNAMENT



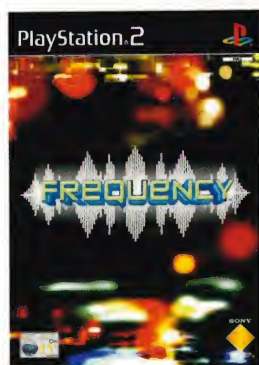
PETER PAN: RETURN TO
NEVER LAND



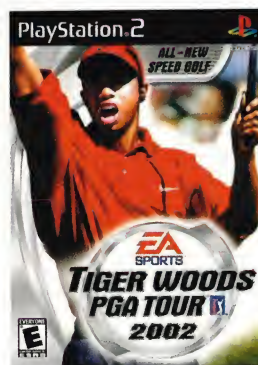
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COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Codemasters' groundbreaking rally romp is back. We clamber into a car with the man himself to find out what's in his driving simulation dashboard.

■ Publisher: Codemasters ■ Players: 1-4
■ Developer: Codemasters ■ Release: Sep



"I take it you've not been in a rally car before," says Colin McRae, before his voice is drowned out by a monstrous engine sound.

He's right, which is why we're reaching out for something to hold on to as his rally-tuned Ford Focus suddenly rockets off at a ludicrous speed along the rugged dirt track.

As it immediately appears that we're heading for an ugly collision with a forestry commission pine, the image of Colin McRae and co-driver Nicky Grist bracing themselves as their car dived and rolled its way out of the World Rally Championship just five days earlier springs inexorably to mind. It looked horrific on TV, and the car certainly took a good battering, but thankfully McRae and Grist walked away unscathed, more concerned about broken dreams than broken bones.

Interviewed that same evening after a routine hospital check-up, McRae seemed circumspect about his accident, accepting it as an occupational hazard of the sport. Renowned for his daredevil driving style, McRae only needed to finish ahead of his rivals Tommi Makinen and Richard Burns in the Network Q Rally of Great Britain to take the overall championship. In fact, at the time of his retirement, McRae was actually leading the way (with Burns back in fourth on the leader board) but he doesn't subscribe to the idea of playing safe. Mishearing an instruction from Grist to cut a left-hand turn, McRae lined himself to cut the immediately following right-hand.

In a split-second he realised his mistake, but seeing that the road's surface looked okay from where he was sitting, McRae tells OPS2 that he decided to cut the right-hand anyway. Despite this miscalculated choice ending all hopes of a second world championship title at the last hurdle, you get the impression that McRae would take the same risk again if he thought he could shave an all-important half second off his stage time.

Anyway, back to the car, and – initial tree hazard negotiated with barely believable ease – McRae continues to give us the drive of our lives. It rapidly becomes clear that despite the seemingly constant threat of collision, there'll be no flipping the car this time. For a start, McRae's on his own practice circuit, and of course he's only driving at 75 per cent. Which makes you wonder just how frightening it is to sit where we are (in the co-pilot's seat) when he's going full pelt.

Leaping over crests, bowling into tight hairpins with abandon, accelerating sideways, gambolling on narrow tracks with sheer drops to the side; riding in a rally car is better than any theme park ride. So inexplicable is the experience that you can barely comprehend you're in a car at all; surely nothing that moves so fast over unstable terrain and around vicious chicanes can actually be touching the



//It is clear that, despite the seemingly constant threat of collision, there'll be no flipping the car this time//



"Excuse me Marshal, when's the next service station? We're low on gas, and Colin wants some Pringles."



Different surfaces will affect handling, and this will change depending on whether they're wet or dry. This is another photo, by the way.



The developers have used data from Ford's engineering team to get the look and feel of the cars just right.

ground, let alone be controlled by the instinctive reactions of one man? And yet there sits Colin McRae, expression of total serenity on his face, making speed-of-light gear changes while constantly readjusting the steering wheel and dancing over the pedals like Fred Astaire.

YOU CAN BE MCRAE

It's a thrilling and thoroughly surreal five minutes. Only after experiencing the drive first hand can you appreciate how far beyond the ken of mortals this rally driving malarkey is. You can imagine what a kick the drivers get out of it. McRae's already done this circuit ten times today so he plays around on a couple of bends, cutting them ever tighter and toying with OPS2's nerves. At the end of the run, he's grinning like a maniac.

All of which makes Colin McRae an ideal videogame figurehead. He's a sportsman in total command of his domain, and willing to push himself that bit further to get results. He represents excitement, adventure and technical excellence and he obviously loves what he does. In essence, we'd all like to be Colin McRae. And that's where Codemasters comes in.

The men responsible for distilling the essence of Colin McRae into videogame form are Producer Guy Wilday and Associate Producer Rick Nath. With two top-selling iterations of *Colin McRae Rally* on PSone under their belts, they're confident about the job in hand and eager to fulfil expectations for the new PS2 incarnation. *Colin McRae Rally 3*'s not due until the Autumn, so the game's still in the planning stages, but Wilday and Nath are adamant that a new platform means a brand new emphasis for the series. "The powerful new console is motivation enough for taking the next step," reasons Wilday. "We also wanted to capitalise on the access we have to Colin and to his team at M-Sport [Ford rally's engineering team] to make the game a more immersive rallying experience. In *Colin McRae Rally 3* our aim is to really make the player feel that they are Colin. We're still finalising exactly how this will work, but there'll be a lot more flow between races. It won't just be a dip-in-and-out thing." Nath hints that there'll be a much more involved vehicle setup screen, as well as a process of analysis and feedback after each rally, although he stresses the importance of retaining easy accessibility for all players is vital. (Not every one enjoys tweaking.)

"We've had a big response from fans of the series detailing what they'd like to see in the new game," he continues. "There are obviously those that would like more of a simulation experience but the majority are really happy with our balanced approach. Yes, they want better graphics, yes, they want better physics, but overall they just want a brilliantly playable racing game."

It's testament to the PlayStation 2 that developers now accept that graphical excellence is a minimum requirement of gamers. If a series is being carried over from PSone to PS2, visual polish alone is not enough. Gamers now demand a whole



new experience.

Wilday: "We've had to look at improving every area of the game. Graphics are a given, so the next thing we jumped on was the physics engine. Now we've got a much more sophisticated method for distinguishing road surfaces, so you won't just notice the difference between gravel and Tarmac, but the depth of the gravel and the wetness of the tarmac at different sections of the same stage."

Just because the game isn't aiming to be an out-and-out rally simulation doesn't mean that the level of detail applied to McRae's Ford Focus will be anything other than utterly meticulous. "The detail is crucial," emphasises Nath. "Detach any panel on our vehicle models and you can see exactly the same parts as you can see on the real cars in the workshop."

In fact, this very interview is taking place in the M-Sport workshop, only a few metres from where an army of serious-faced mechanics are beginning to build a fleet of Ford Focus rally cars for the new season at a cost of £250,000 a throw. Nath calls up some vehicle models on his laptop before comparing the detail with a car being tweaked behind us. "The M-Sport guys have given us access all areas, they've been fantastic," enthuses Wilday. So, is technology at a point where M-Sport's car design computer programs can somehow be implemented into the creation of vehicle models for *Colin McRae Rally*? "Not really, there's only so far you can go. Generating a

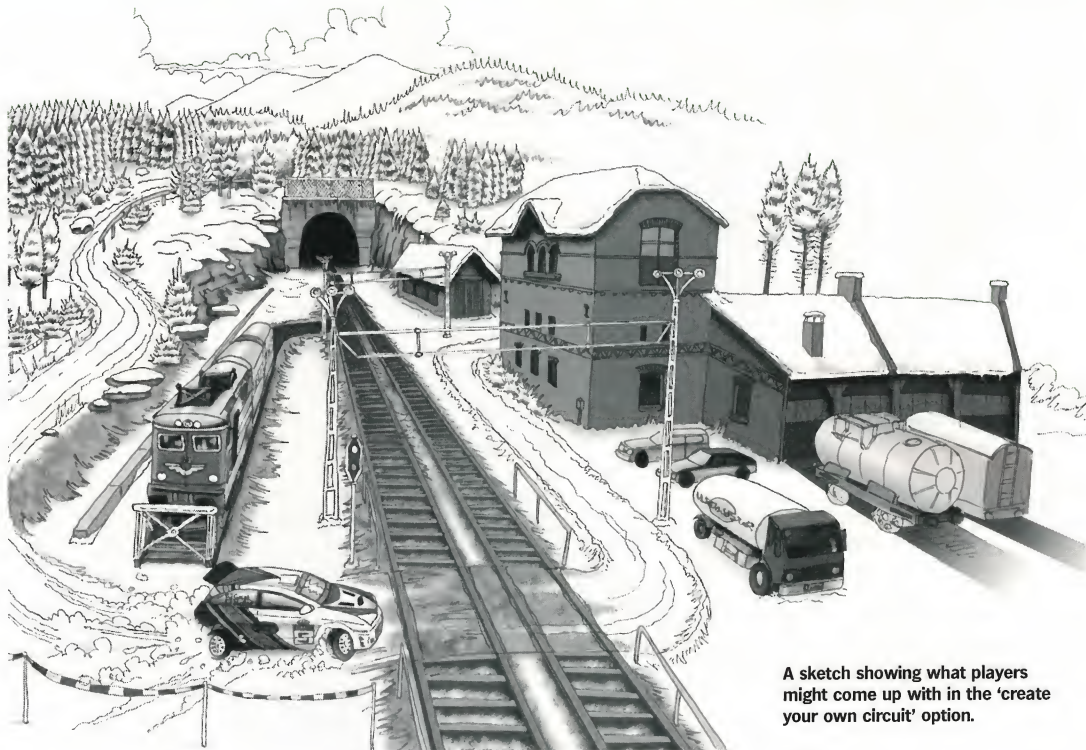


It's the Lake District in case you were wondering. Expect plenty of treacherous conditions like these in the game.

WRC IN 2002

There's no time for Colin to dwell on disaster – the 2002 rally season is already underway. Watch out for the high profile TV coverage, courtesy of Channel 4.

- 17-20 January: **Monte Carlo**
- 31-03 Jan/Feb: **Sweden**
- 07-10 March: **Corsica (France)**
- 22-24 March: **Catalunya (Spain)**
- 18-21 April: **Cyprus**
- 16-19 May: **Argentina**
- 13-16 June: **Acropolis (Greece)**
- 11-14 July: **Safari (Kenya)**
- 08-11 August: **Finland**
- 22-25 August: **Germany**
- 19-22 September: **San Remo (Italy)**
- 03-06 October: **New Zealand**
- 31-03 Oct/Nov: **Australia**
- 14-17 November: **Great Britain**



A sketch showing what players might come up with in the 'create your own circuit' option.

real car is still vastly more complex than generating a car in-game. I'd be keen if we could directly import M-Sport's data – it would make our lives a lot easier – but that day is still a long way off. We've got differing aims anyway; they need total driving precision, we need to make sure it just looks right on-screen."

DRIVING LICENSE

While Codemasters may have unlimited access to McRae and M-Sport, it doesn't own the official WRC license that would allow the development team to work with the actual stages and locations used in the sport. Undaunted, researchers were dispatched to all corners of the world in order to collect physical and photographic data from areas as similar as possible to those raced in the real WRC. Wilday emphasises that the research was thorough and wide-ranging. "We're looking to capture the character of the countries involved, not just the



Codies are still in the planning stages visiting various countries and noting terrain to create challenging new courses specifically designed for a videogame sim.

different road surfaces and climates. We really want to heighten the specifics of certain countries, trying to avoid making a generic snowy course and then just calling it Sweden."

The stages have to be designed from scratch as the real courses can be used as inspiration only, although Wilday views this state of affairs as an advantage. "The freedom allows us to really tailor the game for maximum challenge and enjoyment." "Some real-life rally stages last over an hour so that's not really suitable for the game," Nath continues. "We need to pack all the excitement into a shorter distance. Again, it's about striking that balance between arcade and simulation."

Wilday interjects: "We'd rather aim to include fewer stages but of a higher quality, than loads of substandard courses. The track designers are always looking to implement nuances like deceptive bends or crests, and you've got to somehow incorporate the random factor, because as you've seen, even the best drivers can hit a rock and crash out."

We think we know to whom he refers. We've probably just had a drive with him. A game that is branded with the name of one specific sportsman, as opposed to one which utilises a license for an entire sport, really needs the personality of said sportsman to shine through in the gameplay somehow. Wilday reckons that in Colin McRae, they've definitely got their man. "Colin is the most aspirational driver out there. He has such a distinctive style and that's what we're capitalising on. Colin only knows how to drive at 100 per cent and his motivation is always to win. For me, his approach to driving really is the inspiration behind the game." ■





INTERVIEW

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS/PHOTOGRAPHY: GAVIN ROBERTS

COLIN MCRAE

The man himself talks openly to OPS2 about the disappointments of last season's World Rally Championship and his hopes for success in 2002.

You had some tough luck in the Network Q rally but how do you feel about your performances throughout 2001?

Personally, I've been very consistent. I only made one real mistake all year and unfortunately it happened at the wrong time. But when you're under the pressure to win you've got to drive at that speed and push it to the edge. Take away the disaster in the last rally and the season as a whole has been good. We were leading the manufacturer's championship for a long way and we were in with a chance of winning of the driver's title and the manufacturer's title so that alone is quite an achievement. Unfortunately it's the not winning that sticks in everybody's minds.

You seemed unfazed by the accident.

You've got to accept that things like that can happen in this sport and you're mentally prepared for it. That particular accident wasn't so bad. It looked spectacular but I've had worse.

Your rivalry with Richard Burns was much publicised in the run-up to the Rally of Great Britain. Is it really as intense as the press made out?

Yeah, the rivalry is very strong. But Richard and I don't dislike each other. Obviously both being British and both wanting to win the World Championship, there was a lot of hype. Unfortunately, the result went the wrong way.

Nevertheless, do you feel you're still the 'people's champion'?

I think when you saw the support that turned out during the last rally it was certainly more in my favour. Whether or not some of these people might now desert me for Richard...! All I can do is fight back. At least we get the opportunity to do that straight away.

"I've played other similar games and most of them are really crap, the vehicle handling's nothing like it's supposed to be."

There's less than two months between the end of the Rally of Great Britain and the start of the new rally season in Monte Carlo. Do you get much time for recuperation or do you prefer to dive straight into pre-season training?

I start testing almost immediately, which is a good thing. You don't have time to sit and sulk, you get on with the job. [Monte Carlo is] one I would love to win because it does have a certain prestige, although I don't really like driving in the conditions there.

So what course are you looking forward to taking on in 2002?

The really good thing about the championship is that every course is different – that variety is the good thing about the game as well. My two favourites are Sweden and Safari, because they're so extreme and different to the rest. Safari is almost more of an adventure than a rally, although in the last few years it has become more and more like a European

speed event, which is a shame, although it still has that magical character.

Would you have liked to race back in the days when rallying was more of an endurance test than a speed event?

Yeah, I'd have loved to. I think it would be great if the World Rally Championship still had a one-off event like that.

What input have you had into the the Colin McRae Rally videogames?

I work very closely with Codemasters in trying to make the experience as realistic as possible. I've played lots of other similar videogames and most of them are really

crap, the vehicle handling's nothing like it's supposed to be. I'm in an ideal position to give guidance on how the game should work and how the car should handle.

Are you as good at playing the game as you are driving a real rally car?

No. I always have to practice because wherever I go I get challenged by young kids. I practice a couple of specific stages and insist that anyone who challenges me has to race in a stage of my choice so I don't lose too much face.

How close do you think these videogames can come to recreating the combination of split-second reactions and racing strategy you need to compete in a real-life rally?

There are still going to be differences because one of the main things about driving a car is that you can feel what's happening through the seat of your pants. You can feel when the car's going to lose grip and you can almost anticipate a problem. With a game you can only make decisions based on what you see on screen. But the reliance on quick reactions is the same. As soon as you see the car doing something it shouldn't, you've got to correct it. Videogames are more of a vision thing than a feeling thing, but you still have to be sharp and concentrate 100 per cent.

Could you see a day when videogames such as Colin McRae Rally could be used by manufacturers to test out how to take a particular bend on a particular surface without damaging a car?

The manufacturers would love that. They're already using computers in the design of the cars, the setup, the suspension and so forth. With the technology becoming ever more advanced, you could well find that happening in future. ■



Tackle six highly detailed, albeit fictional, rally tracks across Europe and Africa.

■ Publisher: Infogrames ■ Players: 1-4
■ Developer: Eden Studios ■ Release: June



A few months ago, Eden Studios released a limited preview of its forthcoming rally sequel. "Ooh," we said when shown the six rally-friendly environments – Finland, Corsica, Great Britain, Sweden, Germany and Kenya. "Wow," we muttered at the sight of the partly hand-painted 3D graphics – gloomy forests and sparkling snowfields, tight hill-climbs and dusty desert tracks. With multiple camera angles, cinematic replays, multiplayer competition and an array of officially licensed cars, V-Rally 3 was certainly stacked with potential.

The main, single-player V-Rally mode, however, was still in development. It promised a new type of career play, where you could develop yourself as a driver in addition to the buzz of rally competition. Did this mean switching teams? Having greater input on the setup of your car? Now we've had a chance to take a close look, the answer is 'yes'. While V-Rally 3 boasts Quick Race and Time Attack options, these are just the two veg that accompany the meat of the V-Rally mode. Starting as a teamless rookie driver, the aim is to work your way through the hierarchy to stardom.

This new, re-thought mode also lets you create your own driver, entering your name (which appears on your car), choosing your nationality and even a polygonal likeness. At the start of the season, you're out of work. You have access to email (where job offers and news are displayed) plus ranking and team data. Initially, you'll be offered the chance to test drive with some of the smaller teams in the hope of securing a deal for the season ahead. The driving test consists of completing a random rally stage within a set time limit. Fail and you have to look for another drive. Succeed and you'll be offered a basic contract. A glitzy press launch duly follows, where you can view detailed info about the team and car.

The teams competing in the entry-level 1.6L FWD class (ie, Volkswagen, Citroën, Ford) are rated in terms of their morale, reliability, performance and budget, and these determine the capabilities of your car and pit crew. When you start a V-Rally career, the teams are under-funded and performance is poor. Your goal here is to make a name for yourself, win races, catch the eye of bigger teams, and move up to the beefy 2.0L 4WD cars. You'll also be given a goal for the season, like finish higher than tenth. Fail and you'll be booted out.

Of course, the big test is the rallying itself. Extensive setup options allow you to tweak the car – its speed, acceleration, grip and car balance – via sliding gauges. A third menu lets you adjust steering, transmission type, acceleration and brakes. When you complete a stage, you have 30 minutes to repair key areas of your car. Each part – bodywork, brakes, etc – takes a certain number of minutes to repair. There's more to being a top driver than just driving... ■

V-RALLY 3

The rally line-up is getting crowded, but Eden Studios hopes it's innovative new career mode will attract petrolhead purists looking for long-term kicks.

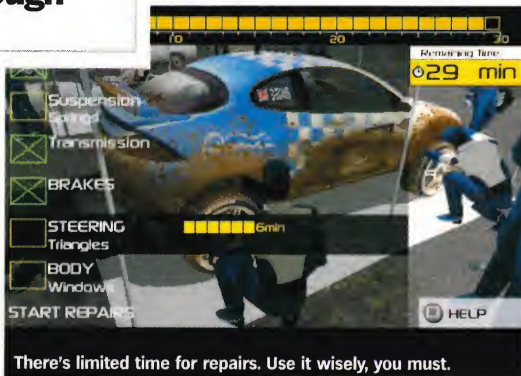


//Starting as a teamless rookie driver the aim is to work your way through the hierarchy to stardom//

This is the instantly recognisable 'every car advert ever made' view.



The 3D visuals are lush, the gameplay fluid. This view's not so good for driving though.



There's limited time for repairs. Use it wisely, you must.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Licensed up and ready to roll, SCI claims its entrant in the crowded rally bazaar is the most authentic yet. With so much competition out there, it had better be right.

■ Publisher: SCI ■ Players: 1-4
■ Developer: Warthog ■ Release: May



What can you do if you feel the need to rally? You might be satisfied with the off-road bits in GT3: A-spec. Or you might

need the depth that *Paris-Dakar Rally* strived for (but missed) and only *World Rally Championship* can provide. But while WRC is the undisputed current king of offroad, the field of challengers is getting bigger all the time. *V-Rally 3* and *Colin McRae Rally 3* immediately catch the eye, and there's *Pro Rally 2002*, *Master Rally* and *EA Sports' Rally* to watch for. There's even the prospect of *WRC 2* before Xmas. The back roads of Wales are about to get crowded.

Also lining up in the pack is SCI's *Rally Championship* – all the muddy fun of WRC but without the word 'world'. It's the seventh game in the RC series (the first to appear on PS2), fully licensed, highly detailed, with a wide range of cars, tracks and options. In fact, SCI proudly boasts that *Rally Champ* offers more cars than any other rally game. There are 25 in all, from the Vauxhall Astra, Renault Megane and the Seat Ibiza, to the Ford Puma and the Peugeot 206. The game also features a selection of classic rally motors, with the feisty Audi Quattro and the little Mini Cooper featuring among them.

Whatever car you choose to drive, *Rally Championship* challenges you to beat the clock on 36 rally stages set over six races. The Wales, Scotland and Manx (Isle of Man) rallies offer fast-paced forest hurtling and hill climbing on a combination of tarmac, gravel and dirt. An Arctic rally tests your skills on ice, while competitions set in the dustier parts of the USA and across the plains of Africa provide... Dust. Stages can be raced in several game modes – Quick Race, Arcade and Multiplayer (which boasts a four-driver split-screen option). There's also a Career mode where you compete in local rallies to win enough money to enter the glamour contests.

Rally Championship incorporates all of the features you expect to find in a rally title – first-person and external camera views, replays, different weather conditions and pacenotes shouted by a co-driver. Like its rivals, the game goes all out to deliver as much detail as possible while retaining that sense of reckless speed. The environments are nicely detailed and the effects (tyres kicking up dust clouds, mud splattering your bodywork) only add to the sense of danger. Smash your car into a rockface or ditch and you'll see all of the dents.

As for the realism, you can adjust your gear ratio, suspension, ride height and tyre type to suit the stage. Although the game is aiming for a more arcade feel, the developers are keen to point out that it's not at the expense of authenticity. Pro rally drivers have been consulted throughout the design process, providing feedback on the handling of the cars and the design of the tracks. It all adds up to a rally title that not only looks good, but also plays well. ■

SCI is going for both visual and gameplay realism. Dust flies up when you take a spin, and hitting objects will cause horrible dents.

//Although the game is aiming for a more arcade feel, it's not at the expense of authenticity//

The arctic levels will test your ability to not slide off the track like some granny caught out by black ice on the A46.





Fans of the hyper 'big air' in SSX Tricky will feel immediately at home

■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Players: 1-2
■ Developer: Page 44 ■ Release: May



Freestyle is developed by EA-affiliated San Francisco studio Page 44, also responsible for EA's series of motocross games. The physics engine for producing a freestyle motocross game was already in place – all Freestyle needed was a sprinkle of that EA Sports BIG magic...

BIG Characters

It may surprise you to discover that Mad Mike Jones, Clifford Adopante (The Flyin' Hawaiian) and Greg 'Albee' Albertyn are actually all real-life freestyle motocross riders, whose popularity in the States compares with pro skaters and BMXers.

BIG Courses

"Our first step away from the Supercross series was to come up with courses that were a little more exciting," says Assistant Producer Jill Goodall. "Supercross simulation courses can be like NASCAR – if you're a fan, you'll drive ovals forever, but otherwise you need more variety." Freestyle features six main courses, a few additional tracks for the Freestyle mode, and a couple of small practice courses with lots of ramps.

BIG Game Modes

Unlike SSX, there aren't Dual Trick and Race modes. Instead, the main game uses a trick reward system: when any rider performs a trick, the points go into a communal 'trick jackpot'. Depending on how you finish, you get a percentage of the jackpot added to your score. "The system forces players to pull tricks and take risks," suggests Rich Rogers, Associate Producer of the game. Tricks aren't only for points though – they also give you turbo. "For this feature we've tried to combine boost properties from SSX and NBA Street There's a simple boost that you can use anytime, but there's also a Freekout gauge. Once this meter's full, you can pull the four-button super-sick trick. If you land that trick, you get amazing hyper-speed for several seconds depending on the quality of your super-sick trick." Outside the main game, there's a Freestyle mode concerned only with trick scores, and a Freeride mode that's purely for racing.

BIG Tricks

The game's 80 tricks are controlled with the shoulder buttons, just like SSX. One set of tricks is common to each rider, but they all also have unique tricks. If you hold tricks in the air your score increases, but there is a score ceiling. Hold too long and your score drops, encouraging more risky combos.

BIG Multiplayer

The Two-player Split-screen mode has not been finalised yet, but the scoring system will be different to that in the main game. "Sadly I don't think we can include AI riders without compromising the game's performance," concedes Rogers. Expect a cat-and-mouse point-stealing affair and plenty of trash talking. ■

FREEKSTYLE

Those crazy genre-mixers behind SSX, lay down some of their funky vibes on the world of dirt bike racing. Chaos naturally ensues.



As you'd expect 'def tricks' are a major part of the gameplay.

//The Freestyle system forces players to pull tricks and take risks//



Freestyle goes for twisty-turny courses rather than the dull ovals of speedway.



Now, this might hurt a little bit.



Given Steve R's attire, could the BIG angling game be next?

INTERVIEW

WORDS: SAM RICHARDS

STEVE RECHTSCHAFFNER

He was once on the US freestyle ski team, he was among the first people to put extreme sports on television and now he's defining videogame largeness with the EA Sports BIG brand. Meet the real BIG daddy.

Back in the late Eighties you were busy putting skating and snowboarding on television with your production company. How did the invention of boardercross come about?

I'd long had this idea about racing skiers or snowboarders in a motocross style. You can imagine how boring motocross would be if they raced them one at a time... Anyway, we had a segment to fill on our TV show, and some sympathetic people at Whistler ski resort. I sketched out a course that was built in one night, and we called it boardercross. Some of the snowboarders were sceptical at first, but as soon as they raced the course five at a time, they were having a blast and crossing the finish line high-fiving each other.

A decade later, SSX must have seemed like the obvious next step...

SSX was a great excuse to do things I dreamed about doing in boardercross without the obvious restraints of gravity and people getting hurt. It took a gladiator approach. The fun part was the creative exercise of 'what ifs'. It's so much easier to invent in the game world because you don't need to deal with physical logistics or sanctioning bodies or any of that.

Was SSX the game that you always wanted to make?

Yeah, it was the favourite of my three ideas when I first started at EA. But these were

the days of Super Nintendo and Mega Drive. If I had built SSX back then it would have been a lot more straightforward.

Before SSX, you developed the Triple Play Baseball series. An early attempt to introduce the BIG philosophy?

Definitely. I just thought that the way to get to a larger audience was to focus on the

When did the idea of the whole EA Sports BIG brand first emerge?

It was simultaneous with the development of SSX. Sure, it was a risk to introduce a whole new brand on the back of one game, particularly as a lot of people were dubious about SSX until it entered the final development stage. The NBA team had an idea for what became *Street* and came to

Name any sport and we're probably already sketching out ideas for the BIG makeover

handful of things that people think of as being fun in baseball. Joe Average is not into deep strategy. We did things like, when you hit a home run, it sounded like an explosion. We got criticised by the hardcore baseball fans, but we continued to outsell everybody by huge numbers!

Would you define an EA Sports BIG game as one that amplifies the fun elements of an existing sport?

That's essentially it. There's still a strong basis in realism. People want to believe that they're actually doing these things. Someone recently suggested that we do a hoverboard game, but that's not for me. I like to have a believable foundation and then build on top of it.

see what we were doing on SSX and the BIG brand grew from there. Luckily it all came together. I think EA Sports BIG has grown the way a brand should grow, driven and defined by its games, not by throwing money around. But by bringing *Sled Storm* and *Freestyle* on board, we can't be complacent. With BIG, I want to ensure that every game we introduce is a new gameplay experience and will have things unique to it outside of what vehicle you're riding.

So it's important to make each game unique then, but which common elements are crucial?

A familiar control system. Pacing. Immense surface appeal underpinned by immense

depth. Quality of presentation. The feeling that you're experiencing the adrenaline rush of the character on the screen.

The BIG philosophy seems flexible enough for you to apply those characteristics to any sports game genre. Are there any interesting drawing board ideas at the moment?

An EA Sports BIG football game would be great. It's a huge opportunity, but we'd have to be very, very cautious when defining the gameplay because football is a sport that people are hugely passionate about around the world. The handful of fantasy elements we may want to introduce have to totally hit the mark, otherwise all you've got is a mucked-up football game. We can bend the rules of a sport but we have to retain its essence. Name any sport and we're probably already sketching out ideas for the BIG makeover. But we'll just have to see what survives.

What's the latest on your downhill mountain bike game, slated to be the next thing from EA Sports BIG after *Sled Storm* and *Freestyle*?

It's going to be out in time for Christmas 2002. We've been working on it for about eight months and the majority of the *Tricky* team are involved. The visual producer on the game has just joined us fresh from supervising the special effects on the last two Spielberg movies. It's going to be a whole new experience, all about characters and story, but it takes place through a sport involving fearsome mountain bikes. That's about all I can say right now. ■



Mat Hoffman 2 retains the huge environments that made the first game stand-out from the BMXing crowd.

- Publisher: **Activision**
- Developer: **Rainbow studios**
- Players: **1-4**
- Release: **June**



Before long, someone will release Bob Carolgees' *Extreme Push Penny*, such is the proliferation of adrenaline sports games and the waning list of celebrity/sports combos ripe for exploitation.

At the forefront of this phenomenon is Activision's *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* series. As the first in an ever-increasing list of stable mates, *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX* (PSone, 2001) proved that the superb *Tony Hawk's* physics engine could do justice to other extreme sports games. Larger arenas, a modified repertoire of tricks and, most importantly, a new challenge for extreme veterans made it an instant success. In fact, it was almost as good as *Tony Hawk's 2*.

Rainbow Studios' next-gen version harnesses the power of PS2 to produce the inevitable hike in graphical quality and, crucially, even more expansive environments. This increase is cleverly introduced. Your first level in *Hoffman's* Oklahoma warehouse seems painfully cramped. But, with a bit of exploration, you'll soon discover switches that unlock secret areas and before you know it you'll be pedalling through gigantic environments.

While the fundamentals of daisy-chaining tricks and ticking off mission goals echo *Tony Hawk's*, Rainbow Studios has implemented changes inspired in part by its rival *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2*. There are now three levels of challenges: Amateur, Semi-pro and Pro. Success in one unlocks the next. There are plenty of flatland tricks, a photo scrapbook and a handful of two-player games. Our favourite is HORSE, a tit-for-tat trick-off for biking supremacy.

Chief among the innovations, however, is a new premise, although it's one with reassuringly familiar elements. The main Progression mode sees you undertake a great American road trip. Your first level goals include finding the keys to your bus and collecting five cans of petrol. Once you're on your way, you'll take in a host of American locales, including Las Vegas, Hawaii, Boston, Chicago and LA.

The surprisingly humorous level goals include picking the money growing on trees in LA and helping a groom to find his wedding rings and get his limos to the church in Las Vegas. It's fun and satisfying, though the levels seem less trick-packed than those in *THPS3*.

Sadly, that's not the only early shortcoming in this preview code. The pseudo-Varsity rock soundtrack is cheesy and there are some worryingly floaty physics that do little for the stomach. It's also unnerving to find that it's possible to infinitely balance on the lip of a ramp.

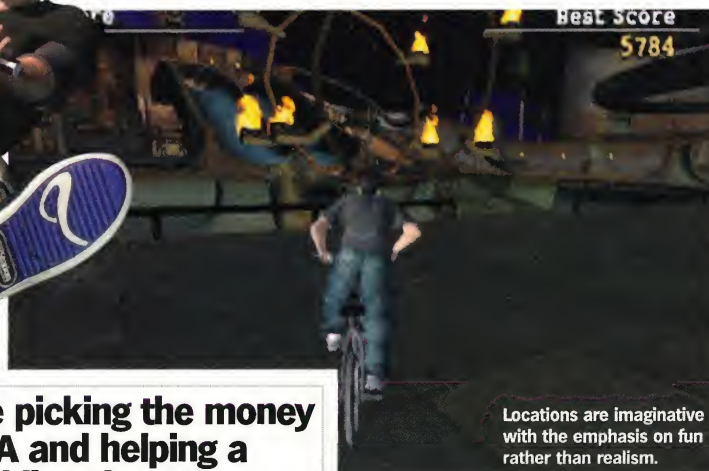
Let's not panic, though. This is a game built on the rock that is the *Tony Hawk's* engine and polished with a string of neat ideas. Judgement is, as ever, reserved for the finished code. ■

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2



Mat's back with another attempt to show that skateboards and BMX bikes are different.

//Level goals include picking the money growing on trees in LA and helping a groom to find his wedding rings//



Locations are imaginative with the emphasis on fun rather than realism.



No Handers

Wahey! The 'no handers' - that basic bike trick beloved of all seven year-olds.



When it gets late, Matt, puts his bike upside down and goes to sleep.



BMX god Mat Hoffman brings his big (h)air to PS2 – he can keep the ruptured spleen, though.

INTERVIEW

WORDS: ROSS COTTINGHAM/PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN BURTON

MAT HOFFMAN

The man they call 'Condor' is getting ready to fly onto PS2 for another helping of extreme BMX action. We catch him in a rare ground-bound moment to get the lowdown on his latest opus.

If man was meant to fly then surely God would have given him wings, not a mangle of chrome tubes, stainless steel spokes and shin-denting pedals? Try telling that to Mat Hoffman. Since first climbing onto a Raleigh Burner back in 1982, he has made it his mission in life to defy gravity and entertain atop a BMX bike. We caught up with him at Telford's two-day Backyard Jam event.

You hold the record for the highest airs. Trying for that feat must have led to some pretty nasty injuries?

Last year I went 26.5 feet above a 24-foot ramp. When I first did it on the 21-foot ramp, I broke the 20-foot air mark. In 1993 I turned that into a half-pipe and I rigged my bike up with a motor to see how high I could get on that. I ended up slamming because it was off centre – I ruptured my spleen and had a lot of internal bleeding. It was a close call, I flatlined that time. Then I rode it again in 1994 and a got 23 feet above it, my highest. Then I kept it dormant for about eight years, but I started thinking maybe I could break 30 feet. So last year I built a 22-foot ramp with 2 feet of vert, got towed (by a motorbike) and hit 26.5 feet. I got about 28 feet up and was close to pulling it, but ended up slamming. I dropped 50 feet onto my head. I was in and out of consciousness for three days.

What on Earth makes you want to come back for more punishment?

I have a strong passion for riding, so I justify a lot of pain. I've had 14 operations, broken many bones, so injury doesn't really bother me too much. I'm driven. I want to accomplish my goal.

So when you're not on the ramps, do you sit at home sedately playing chess or reading a book with your feet up?

I justify a lot of pain. I've had 14 operations and broken many bones so injury doesn't really bother me

Well, no. I like to base jump and I also skydive. I rode off a 3,200-foot cliff, did a couple of back flips and threw my bike away. That was pretty gnarly, it was an intense experience. I've been jumping out of planes for 14 years, I've done lots of skydives. It's peaceful, fun, but my shoulder's getting pretty wrecked. I've dislocated it twice while skydiving. Trying to fly a canopy in with your arm out of its socket is no picnic.

In regards to base jumping, have you ever got to the top of something and thought "Hmm, maybe not"?

I wouldn't get to the top of a building if I

wasn't doing something that was following my heart. When I look over the edge it's like "Oh, it's on now! Focus and make it happen." A lot of people mistake that for stupidity, but I would never consider jumping off the side of a cliff unless I knew I could pull it off. There are no injuries in base jumping, you make it happen y'know. It's an intense focus, and you have to have

a lot of trust in the harmony between your body and your mind. It's really testing what you have, and when you do that people also mistake it as a death wish. It actually makes you feel the most alive you've ever been. I just want to see everything that life has to offer. That's what it's about. It's not stupidity or craziness.

Tony Hawk hit the headlines when he performed a 900° on a skateboard. When did you first do one on a bike?

I was the first person ever to do a 900° back in 1989. That was before anyone on a bike, skateboard, snowboard, in-lines or anything. I've done many since then. I've

also invented over 130 tricks.

That's an impressive number, most of which will feature in your latest game, no doubt. How much input did you have regarding the content and how do you feel the project has turned out?

I'm excited. We have a great game. For *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2*. I wanted to build a little more character into the riders and let people know what BMXers are about. I took the premise of a tour as a basis and took all the guys featured in the game out on the road. We travelled for a few weeks, we would show up at different places unannounced and just ride and document what life on the road is like for riders. There are nine levels and 11 riders in the game. For each rider that you pick, it's possible to open up a different video from that rider's perspective of tour life. There are 99 videos in total to unlock. I'm taking all that footage and making a two-hour television special that'll air on ESPN. It will also come out as a DVD. This time there's a lot more flatland on the courses so you can totally rip it up. The action's a little faster and the animation flows better. Before it was just *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* on a bike, and the bike kinda moved like a skateboard, but now it moves like a bike.

Do you think the game series has turned people on to BMXing?

Yeah, it's working backwards, totally. I've done some things with Best Buy – a computer retail store in the States – where I go and do some autograph signings and it was interesting to hear kids say, "I got your game and I was super psyched, so I went out and got a bike." That's what really inspired me to make the second one more than just a game, I wanted to make it about the culture and who we are, what we do. ■



Steep inclines take a lot out of your rider. So make sure you have frequent water breaks.

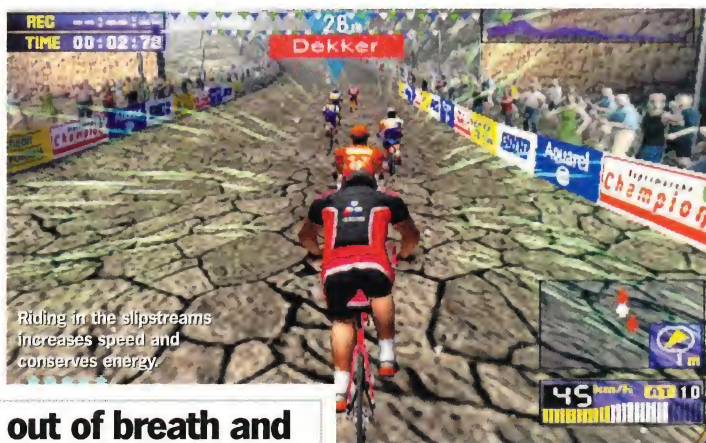


LE TOUR DE FRANCE

Take on the toughest challenge in the entire world of sport in Konami's innovative version of the epic cycling classic. Stabilisers are not an option.

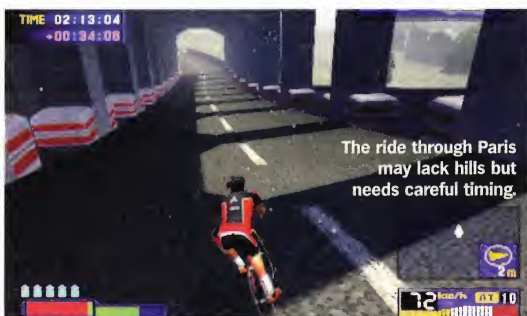


It might be tempting to just steam ahead, but you need to pace yourself.



Riding in the slipstreams increases speed and conserves energy.

//Once your cyclist is out of breath and wheezing like a broken footpump, he loses control of his bike and stops//



The ride through Paris may lack hills but needs careful timing.



Lose control and you'll find yourself in a daze at the side of the road.

■ Publisher: Konami ■ Players: 1-2
■ Developer: KCE Osaka ■ Release: June



As an annual event, the Tour De France is up there with The Oxbridge Boat Race, The London Marathon and Badminton Horse Trials. You've heard of them and they receive TV coverage as a token gesture, but unless you know someone involved, the only way you'll find out the winner is in the light-hearted final story on News At Ten. All credit then to KCE Osaka for developing a game for the small fraternity of PS2-owning Tour De France enthusiasts, of which we're sure there must be at least a handful.

The cyclists who take part in the Tour De France are among the fittest athletes in the world and deserve to be better recognised. The course, which takes place in Paris, Luxembourg, Brittany, the Alps and the French Riviera, is full of calf-destroying hill climbs and high-speed mountain descents over an exhausting 22-day stretch – all of which requires immense stamina and determination.

Le Tour De France, the game, demonstrates this well, by requiring the player to balance pedalling with resting (using \odot in much the same way as other racing games) and to take breaks to rejuvenate energy and heal knocks and bruises. This is the main challenge, because once your cyclist is out of breath and wheezing like a broken foot pump, he loses control of his bike and stops moving. A further way to take the strain off the ride is to position yourself in the slipstream of your competitors, represented by a coloured trail that appears from behind the bikes.

Although you can set gear-changing to manual, it's essential to learn how to steer the bike and use the brakes first. This isn't too demanding on the less twisty sections of the course, but necessitates careful control on treacherous downward slopes. The challenge is complicated further by the weather variations – wet roads obviously affecting stopping distances.

The on-screen view is essentially that of a driving game with a bike replacing the car, and there's an exciting impression of speed when careering down an incline or sprinting for the finish line. What *Le Tour De France* lacks at this stage is graphical flair and it seems unlikely this will change significantly in the finished version. Some of the background textures basic at best and there are occasional redraw issues. In its favour, though, there's an impressive level of depth in developing a rider through training to competing in the Tour De France itself, buying new equipment and changing between the various cycling teams.

As with horse racing and fishing, cycling is the dictionary definition of 'niche' when it comes to videogames. Fortunately, KCE Osaka appears to have done enough to sustain interest for those with a passion for the sport. The question is, does it have what it takes to attract the attention of the resolutely non-biking masses? ■

Get the lowdown on all the other cracking sports games arriving on PS2 in the remainder of 2002.

RELEASE ROUND-UP



SHAUN MURRAY'S PRO WAKEBOARDER

■ Publisher: Activision
■ Developer: Shaba Studios
■ Release: September
Wakeboarding might not be the best known of extreme sports but Shaun

Murray is the world's best at it. The sport (and the game) involves waterskiing on a snowboard towed behind a boat. The trick element comes in riding over ramps and performing moves while airborne and it's also possible to grind along docks, boats and pipes.



NEXT GENERATION TENNIS

■ Publisher: Wanadoo
■ Developer: Carapace/Spark
■ Release: June

With the aim of taking on Namco's ace *Smash Court Tennis*, the developer has accurately recreated courts used in the US and French Open, each with four different surfaces. It's also the only tennis game on PS2 to feature Wimbledon wannabe Tim Henman. Hopefully, his videogame incarnation will be better than the real thing...



F1 2002

■ Publisher: EA Sports
■ Developer: EA Sports
■ Release: June

Aside from all the obvious car, team and driver updates, EA Sports' main aim for this latest instalment in the long-running

series is to up the intensity of the racing experience. A great example of this is the new 'slingshot' bar – as you sit in the slipstream of another vehicle it charges up and when full gives you an overtaking boost accompanied by a whooshing sound effect and speed blurred visuals.



FOOTBALL MANIA

■ Publisher: Lego/EA
■ Developer: Silicon Dreams
■ Release: June

Firmly aimed at the younger end of the PS2 fraternity, *Football Mania* takes the beautiful game and reinvents it with LEGO players and environments. Players will be able to customise their teams to feature Wild West cowboys, knights and martians and matches take place in unlikely environments like Mars and the deck of a pirate ship.



GRAVITY GAMES BIKE STREET VERT DIRT

■ Publisher: Midway
■ Developer: Midway
■ Release: August

Midway's first extreme sports offering has a wealth of new features not seen in other BMX titles. Starring a series of recognised bikers like Dennis McCoy and Fuzzy Hall (plus crazy fantasy characters, including a block of cheese!), there are 1,500 different tricks for them to perform and many of the levels will be multi-tiered.



F355 CHALLENGE

■ Publisher: SCEE
■ Developer: Sega/AM2
■ Release: September

Little information has been revealed on this PS2 port of Yu Suzuki's hardcore Dreamcast Ferrari racer. The DC version was perhaps the most accurate driving simulation ever created. And while this made it incredibly difficult, it also made for a stunning challenge. The PS2 game is expected to have improved visuals and exclusive gameplay elements.



KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

■ Publisher: Activision
■ Developer: Treyarch
■ Release: September

Surfing games have rarely made the videogame grade but *Tony Hawk's* developer Treyarch might just have nailed it. Each individual wave will change in one of six randomly selected ways, like swelling, cresting, or flattening out, ensuring no two are ever the same. Players can then go to town with cool air, tube and face tricks.



MX SUPERFLY (MX 2003)

■ Publisher: THQ
■ Developer: Pacific Coast Power & Light
■ Release: September

The follow up to THQ's Moto/Supercross sim promises to improve on some of its predecessors failings. Everything in *MX2003* is even bigger and better – 15 new tracks, a Freestyle Career mode, a track editor and *Tony Hawk's*-style secret areas and mini-games.



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2

■ Publisher: SCEE
■ Developer: Evolution Studios
■ Release: October

This update of the genre-leading rally sim is yet to be formally announced but Producer Martin Kenwright told us that it will be coming out later this year. He also mentioned that in the new game you'll be able to see twice as much track in the distance than in the previous version and there will be much improved car damage.



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2 (WINNING ELEVEN 6)

■ Publisher: Konami
■ Developer: KCET
■ Release: October

Already out in Japan, *Winning Eleven 6* is the sequel to the best football sim ever

Pro Evolution Soccer, boasting even better animation and gameplay. *Pro Evo 2* (presumed title for the UK version) will have all the latest strips plus a host of new teams. Improved commentary is also promised so it's farewell to the bizarre ramblings of Chris James...



RIDING SPIRITS

■ Publisher: Bam! Entertainment Europe
■ Developer: Spike
■ Release: October

Boldly described by the developer as *Gran Turismo* on two wheels, this has a lot to live up to. An early look at the game shows smooth high speed racing and no less than 200 bikes including Yamaha, Honda and Kawasaki. The game's main mode allows you to add new parts to your bike bought with race winnings.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

■ Publisher: Activision
■ Developer: Neversoft
■ Release: Late 2002

Neversoft has completely changed the game dynamic – players now begin in a

free skate mode and approach other characters for challenges. These range from performing tricks for a photographer to a time trial race while being pursued by the cops. It goes without saying the game has new tricks and courses which have been massively increased in size.



RACE OF CHAMPIONS

■ Publisher: Activision
■ Developer: Climax Brighton
■ Release: December

Taking its name from the annual event held in Gran Canaria, this single lap rally pits the world's best drivers from all disciplines against each other. Climax has built on the original race and added new features like extra tracks and a Career mode. The physics model allows vehicles to fall apart and explode – it's even possible for your co-driver to fall out the door!



CLUB FOOTBALL

■ Publisher: Codemasters
■ Developer: Hoo Doo Studio
■ Release: Late 2002

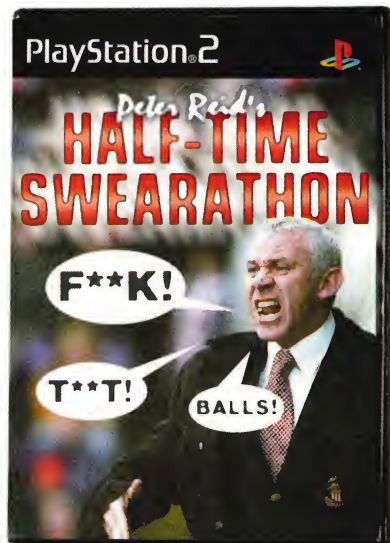
Codies has taken a unique approach to football sims by producing 15 separate team-themed titles based around a core gameplay model. Fans will be able to buy a game that bears their club's name and features their stadium, strips and players. Teams available will include Man United, Arsenal, Rangers, Leeds and Liverpool plus a further eight European clubs.

MAKE THESE

WORDS: LEE HALL & LEE HART

In this world of ever more tenuous celebrity endorsements and increasingly obscure sports, it's time to finger the games we, you and every other right thinking person really wants to see...

When the latest extreme sports release is a licensed inline skating offering, you know it's time the games companies found inspiration elsewhere. Surely a bit of creative commissioning and gentle pressure on the censor could facilitate some of the best celebrity tie-ins ever? Why settle for some forty-year-old American child-man playing with his skateboard when we could have truly recognisable celebrities contesting decent, down-to-earth sports? We want to see Lisa Reilly tongue-fighting Ann Widdecombe. Michael Flatley's hardcore dance mat game. And anything involving naked supermodels moving in a suggestive manner. Publishers, wake up and smell the puerile fart gags! We demand these games right now!



PETER REID'S HALF-TIME SWEARATHON

The Pitch:

For some reason, 'mild mannered' Scouse monkey man Peter Reid has earned himself a reputation for chucking in the odd blue word during his half-time team talks. Always one to laugh at himself (we hope), Peter has endorsed this right royal swear-up and allegedly, "f*****g loves" the early demo version. "It's f*****g boss," he allegedly told our reporter. Allegedly adding, "it beats the shit out of that c**k Houllier's game." Indeed.

The gameplay follows a *PaRappa*-style rhythm action formula – but with lots of swearing. Follow on-screen prompts to issue progressively angrier, and more colourful dressing room rants against your failing team. Bollock the players successfully and you'll inspire them to victory, miss out vital expletives and defeat is assured.

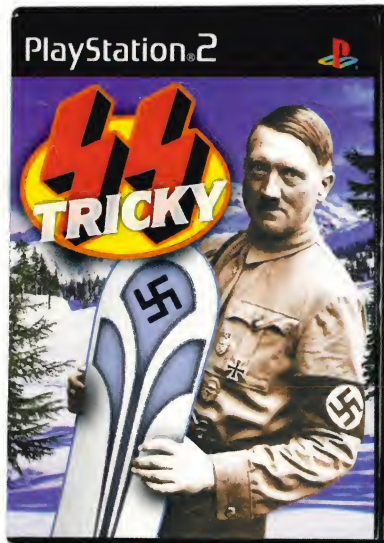
Since football is a tribal game you might want to make a verbal assault on the league with another of your favourite foul-mouthed managers. Barry Fry's heart-stopping missives are acknowledged as some of the best in football and Alex Ferguson's seething Glaswegian 'hairdryer' outbursts should not be missed. Plus! Graeme Taylor's "Do I not f*****g like that..." is available as a hidden combo.

The final challenge? Copy Arsene Wenger's piss-boring, quasi-intellectual ramblings before delivering a nun-busting tirade of abuse. In French!

Commercial Potential:

7 / 10

Rhythm action that simply scorches off the tongue. You know, it might just work...



SS TRICKY

The Pitch:

"It's tricky to rock a rhyme..." especially when the fate of the Fuhrer is in your hands! You play as one of Hitler's top henchman in an Aryan snowboarding adventure with an iron strong plot. Kicking off on the Munich Beer Hall level, you'll bust spectacular moves ranging from the V-Rocket to the Blitzkrieg and unlock Goebbels, Goerring and plenty more famous faces of evil. They'll even cry out sampled expletives as you hit the powder, including classics, "English pig dog!", "There is no escape!" and "The var is over for you, maggots!"

The varied mission mode involves foiling a plot to assassinate your megalomaniac boss by grinding over a briefcase to deactivate its explosive contents. Alternatively, achieve victory for the forces of Good by knocking the briefcase into the path of the Fuhrer, then busting the Allied Victory flip and D-Day Landing grind to dazzle Hitler, set off the bomb and win the war for the Free World.

The ultimate aim is to play as the man himself and grind down from the Eagle's Nest hideaway in Austria. Start off as a member of the Hitler Youth and, once you're up to speed, it's time to invade foreign slopes and claim them as your own. Complete the main game to unlock Lebensraum, a free ride mode that lets you glib and fly over ramps, catching more air than the Luftwaffe. Then watch the poignant final cut scene as Adolf flips into the Bunker and shoots his own malevolent face in. "Achtung! Oh, scheisse..."

Commercial Potential:

8 / 10

When extreme sports meets extreme politics there can only be one outcome. Victory!



DANI BARE'S CHAMPIONSHIP MAN HANDLER

The Pitch:

If you thought managing a top-flight football club was hard, try juggling a career on Page 3 with grafting your way through England's 9,000 professional footballers. And that's exactly what you'll do in the game that's being described as 'Championship Manager meets the Karma Sutra'.

You play as rough-as-a-camel's-nut TV presenter Dani Bare and kick the game off by netting a dodgy non-league carthorse. Shagging your way through the divisions, your ultimate aim – in a battle for tabloid survival against a string of rival slags – is to get a top six finish for the chance to play with the big boys in Europe. Literally.

Money-grabbing tactics are imperative to this game and you'll need to spend any cash earned wisely – lycra miniskirts, Wonderbras, tarty make-up and other accessories could make you irresistible to the elite of footballing thickos. Extra points are awarded for servicing blokes so ugly their mother cried when they flopped into the world (Luke Chadwick, Shaun Goater, etc.) and for pretending you're in love while pushing a single.

How are you going to cope when you get dumped? Simple – get sloshed, get your knickers off and step out of limos in front of invited paparazzi men, that's how. And don't forget to bemoan media intrusion when the photos you paid to be taken hit the red tops the next day!

Commercial Potential:

6 / 10

Possibly a bit hardcore for fans of more traditional footy management sims.

GAMES!



ZOMBIE WRESTLING

The Pitch:

Like a bent promoter filling a national tour of leisure centres, this game resurrects the careers of some of history's favourite wrestlers... literally. In a WWF SmackDown stylee, *Zombie Wrestling* is a brawl-'em-up spin off from the *Resident Evil* series starring some of the hairiest, sweatiest and, frankly, deadiest wrestling favourites from down the years. They might have expired but they scrap like ravenous Central American fighting dogs!

The re-animated and renamed roster includes Rotting Haystacks, Dead Daddy and Decomposing Nagasaki. Watch in horror as these giants of wrestling pull off special moves the living guys just couldn't stomach. Gasp as Haystacks rips off his fetid arm to club a battalion of zombie grannies wielding their handbags! Chunder as you realise Dead Daddy's trademark belly flop is suddenly more deadly when his toxic, puss-ridden innards ooze out to suffocate his opponents. This game certainly isn't for the faint-hearted!

What's more, there's no match fixing here as a collective of booze-addled promoters draft in some very famous, very dead celebrities to do REAL combat. Ever wondered how JFK would fare against 'Big' Joe Stalin? How would mad-haired physicist Albert Einstein tackle an angry T-Rex? And, in the Tag Team division wouldn't you love to see George Orwell and Oscar Wilde lock-up with Picasso and Leonardo da Vinci? Exactly.

Commercial Potential:

9 / 10

Wrestling is big. Violence is big. Death is big. Celebrities are big. This'll be big.



TONY ADAMS DRUNK DRIVING

The Pitch:

Far safer than its real life alternative – and legal! – Tony Adams presents a master class in boozed-up motoring. This is a hardcore kerb-mashing test of driving skills and drinking stamina. You race as one of 13 professional footballers past and present, with a co-driver plying you with alcohol while mixing slurred course instructions with the occasional belch. And more often than not they get it completely wrong – you see, they're leathared too!

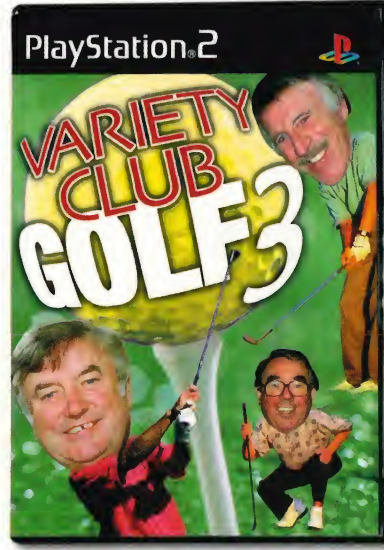
The line-up of duos includes George Best/Jimmy Greaves and Paul Gascoigne/Jimmy 'Five Bellies' (the only non-pro footballer to appear in the game, but as a professional drinker he qualifies on a technicality). Ultimately, you'll take the wheel as former 'sultan of swig' Tony Adams himself, egged on by your crazy co-driver Paul Merson. But watch out! Merse's lager-induced lisp will worsen with every bend until he's barely comprehensible. And if he starts betting on the outcome of each corner, you're in big trouble!

As well as winding lanes leading from country pubs, some urban levels allow you to slide through busy city streets as the screen fades intermittently to black, sometimes wobbling uncontrollably. Get to the Priory Clinic in time on the final level and you'll be excused by the nation as a 'victim', rather than being exposed as the multi-millionaire piss-head fool you really are.

Commercial Potential:

3 / 10

Probably won't beat the pompous censor's red pen. Which is a shame.



VARIETY CLUB GOLF 3

The Pitch:

This long-running series comprises a load of recycled material from earlier incarnations. Heard the one about the light entertainment favourites who like to play a round? Oh yes, you're certainly on safe ground with this celebrity golf sim featuring a bevy of comedy legends such as Jimmy Tarbuck, Bruce Forsyth, Lennie Bennett and, of course, Ronnie Corbett (actual size).

You won't beat that feeling when you hit a hole in one with Brucey and his boiled-chicken-falling-off-the-bones body contorts into his trademark victory pose (knee up, fist against head). Laugh as you put your opponent off their drive with a classic Tarby "Huh-ho!" Taunt your opponent's misplaced putt as Roy Walker with "It's good but it's not right." And why not earn a much needed win for Les Dennis against serial wife-shagger Neil 'that nob off the Homebase ads' Morrissey?

Best played with pals, this *Everybody's Golf*-style game revolves around a charity skins event (The Ready Money Round). It's fast, furious, and only occasionally racist/misogynistic. The best feature of all is the gallery of unlockable stars who shine like a honey roasted peanut in a pool of social club vomit. Rasp unforgivable slurs as Stan Boardman (with his down-trodden caddy Kenny Lynch), try to get Irritated chums to 'chase you' as Duncan Norville, and sicken the nation with your pant moustache as Bella Emberg. Unmissable!

Commercial Potential:

9 / 10

So many light entertainment favourites. So many laughs. This is a gift-edged winner.

CALL THE TASTE POLICE!

Ten more sports games heading to your PS2! (But only if the industry is hijacked by a group of mentalists).

■ **Pol Pot Black**
Realistic snooker sim with the renowned Cambodian tyrant and many more cheeky ex-despots.

■ **Robert Maxwell Diving**
Belly flop like an embezzling tycoon in this sea-based diving game!

■ **Anna Kournikova's Nude Tennis 2003**
Tennis sim starring the lovely Anna. With no clothes on.

■ **Premier League Nightclub Brawling**
Power Stone-style 3D fighter starring a host of Premiership bad boys. Targets include teenage tarts and taxi drivers.

■ **John Prescott Boxing**
Take pops at various mulleted members of the public in this heavyweight political brawler.

■ **Jenna Jameson's Ping Pong**
The porn starlet does ping pong. Her way.

■ **Midget Basketball 2K2**
B-ball sim with tiny people attempting to chuck the ball up to the hoop.

■ **Prince Philip's African Gun Party 2**
Slaughter endangered species and insult the locals in this upper crust shooter. Royally good fun!

■ **Simon Le Bon's Yachting Challenge**
Race expensive yachts and try not to capsizе them and ruin your fancy New Romantic quiff.

■ **Gareth Southgate's 'Couldn't Hit A Cow's Arse With A Banjo' Shootout**
Penalty shootout game with the goals moving randomly across the screen to try and catch Gareth's inept punts.

H A R D C O R E

Cheating is frowned upon in the world of sport. But in videogames? Hell, it's positively encouraged! Welcome to our tips section. We've got huge guides to *Pro Evolution Soccer* and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*, plus a sports games database packed with codes and secrets. Go on, get cheating!

COMPLETE GUIDE

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Konami's debut PS2 instalment of its legendary ISS series is, without question, the Best Football Game Ever Made™. Here we present all the tips and tactics you'll need to master in order to scale the leagues and win some silverware.

SILKY SKILLS

For the most part, the controls of *Pro Evolution Soccer* are identical to previous ISS games. However, there is an array of fancy new moves and tricks which aren't immediately apparent and they're all included here...

ATTACKING



SHOOTING - ⓧ

The longer you press the button down, the greater the force behind the ball. Too much power affects the accuracy however, and the ball is likely to be sliced into row Z. Keeping an eye on the power gauge is important because the amount of power you need depends on your positioning. For example, if you're outside the box then (obviously) more power is needed than if you were inside it. The maximum you should aim for at any time though is about three quarters of the power gauge. Perfect this and any striker worth his salt should be able to force a save at the very least.

When receiving a cross in the area, the positioning of your striker will determine what sort of shot they perform. The kind of acrobatics that are possible include headers, diving headers, bicycle kicks, volleys, half-volleys and toe-pokes. It's worth practising your positioning on the training ground because the satisfaction of scoring in a manner that's slightly out of the ordinary is immense. The hardest shot to master is the chipped shot, which you perform by holding down the ⓧ button and then

pressing ⓧ. This is devilishly effective when you're one-on-one with the keeper (and they come charging out) but knowing just how much power to apply to your shot takes skilled judgement and plenty of hard graft on the training pitch.

Advanced Tip:

When you charge up your power bar to take a kick, the striker will no doubt take a second to tee up the shot on their favoured foot. During this time, if you press the ⓧ button the striker will perform a feint move and the shot will be cancelled out. Once mastered, you can turn defenders inside out and score crowd-pleasing (not to mention cheeky) goals.



SHORT PASSING - ⓧ

The majority of your passing plays will be orchestrated by the ⓧ button. For this you need to determine the direction of your pass using the D-pad and also the power, dependant on how hard you press the button. This button is also used for cushioned, passing headers and back-heels (by pressing in the opposite direction as you pass). In *Pro Evolution Soccer* there's a lot more onus placed on ground passing (as opposed to lofted balls) as a vital means of breaking open defensive lines and creating shooting possibilities, as it gives you much more control of the game.

Advanced Tip:

Okay, you've got the basics down to a fine art, but what about that ruthless slayer of defenders – the one-two pass? This was an essentially tool for obtaining high scorelines in the PSone games and it's back with a vengeance in this sequel – although it's much harder to perform. Basically, you must hold down the **Ⓢ** button and then press **ⓧ** to make the initial pass. Your original ball carrier will now knock the ball to a team mate and continue a forward run, so just before your team mate receives the ball, press the **Ⓢ** button and they will instantly knock a through ball on.



DRIBBLING – **Ⓢ**, **Ⓢ**, or **Ⓢ**

One of the biggest new enhancements with Pro Evolution Soccer is the ability to run with the ball. Where before a solo run was the stuff of dreams, now it is easily achievable thanks to three different types of sprint. On the one hand, you've got the traditional **Ⓢ** sprint, which is for use in wide open spaces when you can charge in a straight line without having to turn and evade tackles. Then there's the new **Ⓢ** sprint, which is still pretty nippy, but you have more control over your runner and can easily drag the ball past wrong-footed defenders. However for this method, you must take your finger off the **Ⓢ** button before attempting shots, otherwise you'll merely change your tactics.

Finally, there's the 'inviting' **Ⓢ** sprint. By holding the **Ⓢ** button and using the D-pad to move, your player slows down to a snail's pace and timidly walks with the ball. This move is seemingly useless, but, if you combine it with other sprint moves, it can become an integral string in your attacking bow. For example: bomb down the wing using the **Ⓢ** sprint, slow down slightly with the **Ⓢ** sprint and make a last second drag to turn a defender and then slow it right down by holding the **Ⓢ** button, inviting defenders to come and rob you, before charging off again with the **Ⓢ** sprint. Try it, it works!

Finally, experienced players can double tap the **Ⓢ** button to perform a 'step over'. Useless in every sense other than it looked good in the PSone ISS games, this has now been tweaked and actually works, provided you know exactly when to time it. When performing a step over, remember to change direction as you do it to zig-zag past those opposing players.

Advanced Tip:

When running with the ball, you don't have to resign yourself to the fact that the defender that has just come into view is going to steal the ball off you. Where before a well-timed tackle was a dead-cert for robbing the ball, now you can press the R3 button (press the right analogue stick inwards until it clicks) to jump. By timing this right, you can ride those tackles with ease.



LONG PASSING/CROSSING – **Ⓢ**

By pressing the **Ⓢ** button it's possible to loft the ball to a team mate. However this requires precision power to ensure it gets to your intended receiver, and is only really effective when your team mate is in acres of space. We advise that this button is used purely for crossing, and there are three different types to master. When a winger is in possession of the ball, you can perform a standard high cross by pressing the **Ⓢ** button once. But by pressing it two or three times in quick succession, you can perform middle height and low crosses, which will keep your opponents' guessing. Combine these crosses with a diving header at the near post and you have the

recipe for a truly memorable goal. Of course, such is the realism of this game that some crosses may even turn into fluke shots and you can watch, mesmerised, as your intended pass sails over the goal and dips under the crossbar. At other times though, the winger may just screw the cross into the crowd – it's this kind of unpredictability in the game that helps to make Pro Evolution Soccer so superbly realistic.

Advanced Tip:

When using the **Ⓢ** button to take corners, you should try aiming the cross slightly ahead or behind the intended team mate and then use the D-pad to apply swerve as you hit the ball. This technique is favoured by all the greats like Beckham and Zidane, as it makes the goalie anticipate catching the ball, only for it to bend away from him at the last moment leaving him helplessly stranded with the goal begging.



THROUGH BALL – **Ⓢ**

When you master the through ball, you'll see instantly how your players develop an understanding of each other's abilities, and new goal-scoring possibilities are opened up. Basically, the through ball button will make your ball carrier pass the ball into the space ahead of the recipient – meaning they can run onto it without breaking their stride. However, this move takes a lot of practice because it's only effective when you can actually see some space opening up. Just pressing it in the hope of cleaving open a defensive line seldom works and you risk losing possession of the ball. Also, when using the through ball move, take into account the speed of your recipient, because if the ball is placed well in front of them, they may not reach it before a defender steals it or hoots it clear.

Advanced Tip:

Once you've mastered the along the ground through ball, try the deadly lofted through ball. To perform this move, hold down the **Ⓢ** button and then press **Ⓢ**. If the recipient has space ahead of them, the ball will sail over the defenders and land at their feet, but be careful as this move is often likely to be closed down, turning possession of the ball over to the opposition.

AT A GLANCE – TRICK MOVES

Once you've mastered the basics, try these little tricks and you'll be skinning defenders like Giggsy or Rivaldo with ease!

Move	Command
Feint	Ⓢ + ⓧ
Step-over	Ⓢ , Ⓢ
Chipped shot	Ⓢ + Ⓢ
Chipped through ball	Ⓢ + Ⓢ
Jump	R3
Back-heel	Opposite direction + Ⓢ
Low one-two pass	Ⓢ + Ⓢ , Ⓢ
High one-two pass	Ⓢ + Ⓢ , Ⓢ
Fake one-two pass	Ⓢ + Ⓢ , Ⓢ



SECRET TEAMS

Pro Evolution Soccer contains loads more hidden teams than fans of the series have come to expect. Included this time round are five all-time classic teams full of legendary players from football history. They are unlocked by winning certain international competitions with certain teams.

Euro Classic

Win the European Cup with either England, Italy or Yugoslavia to unlock this team of Euro all-stars. Best, Charlton, Cantona, Platini, Baresi, Moore, Zoff – you won't know who to leave out.

Classic Netherlands

Lift the European Cup as the Netherlands to get their total footballing predecessors. Van Basten, Cruyff and Gullit in attack, Rijkaard and Koeman in defence. The best team in the game.

Classic Germany

Win the European Cup with Germany and you'll get this top, teutonic team. The epitome of German efficiency, Beckenbauer controls things from the back while Muller and Rummenigge are deadly up front.

Classic Brazil

Win the American Cup playing as Brazil to get this fantastic team. With players like Pele, Zico, Garrincha and Careca available up front, the attacking skill of this side is frightening.

Classic Argentina

Lift the American Cup as Argentina to unlock the Argie all stars. Who's the little fella with the big afro in attack? Why, it's Diego Armando Maradona and he's by far the best player in the game.

EXTRA STADIUM

If you fancy playing a behind closed doors friendly match on the Clubhouse training pitch, then all you have to do is win the Konami Cup with any team. Once the cup is in your trophy cabinet, the extra stadium will be unlocked. Simply scroll through the various stadia on the Exhibition Match settings screen to select it. Somewhat bizarrely, you can still hear the roar of the crowds while playing in this stadium, even though there are no spectators to be found in the stands.

DEFENDING



FOOT-IN TACKLE – **Ⓢ**

To avoid the risk of losing players to an early bath, you'd be well advised to stick with this method of tackling (unless in desperate circumstances). When you aren't in possession of the ball, hold down the **Ⓢ** button (in conjunction with **Ⓢ** to run) and you'll close down the opposing player and, provided you're positioned correctly, stick a foot in to steal the ball.



SLIDING TACKLE – **Ⓢ**

If an attacker has raced ahead of your defender and is dashing towards the box, the sliding tackle is often an effective move for making a last ditch attempt to prevent a shooting opportunity – just make sure you time it right! Also, this move is effective if you're facing an attacker as it means, as long as you get the direction right, that you'll always take the ball and not the player.



CLEARANCE – **Ⓢ**

As Alan Hanson often exclaims: "Ye cannae score from row Z!" Never has a truer phrase been uttered in regards to football and it roughly translates as 'if in doubt, hoof it out!' If the ball falls to your attacker anywhere in or around the box, use the **Ⓢ** button to belt it back upfield. This button also works as a strong clearing header.

Advanced Tip:

If you find yourself overrun or just need a bit of back up when chasing an opposing player with the ball, you can press **Ⓢ** + **Ⓢ** to call out a second defender. This will dramatically increase your chances of winning the ball back and launching an immediate counter attack.

AT A GLANCE – DEFENSIVE MOVES

Keep these moves in mind when you want to stamp out opposing attacks and improve your goalie's chances of keeping a clean sheet...

Move	Command
Second defender	Ⓢ + Ⓢ
Bring out keeper	Ⓢ
Sliding tackle	Ⓢ
Punt	Ⓢ
Foot-in tackle	Ⓢ
Close them down	(Hold) Ⓢ

FREE KICK MASTERCLASS

Fancy snatching a dramatic last-grasp winner like Becks? Or perhaps you want to try bending one in like the Brazilian maestros? If so, then follow these easy steps for perfecting the great art of free kick taking...



SCENARIO #1: CLOSE RANGE

If you're awarded a free kick near to the area, preferably facing the goal, then try this method for banging one in: press **↓** on the D-pad when you strike the ball, which will give it enough power and accuracy to hit the target when you're just outside the area, but any further and the keeper will have plenty of time to save as the kick tends to be quite slow.

Step 1: Direct your kicker so that they're aiming the ball towards the opposite side of the goal to where the goalie is standing, taking into account that any

aftertouch you apply will then curve it further away from the keeper.

Step 2: Press and hold **↓** on the D-pad and then press the **Ⓢ** button to your desired power level. You should aim for about two thirds of the power bar for the best results – any more and the accuracy of your shot will suffer greatly.

Step 3: Just after you strike the ball, apply any desired aftertouch by using the D-pad, otherwise watch it (hopefully) sail over the wall and into the top corner.



SCENARIO #2: MID RANGE

If you're awarded a free kick several yards back from the penalty box, then use this method for scoring. With no additional direction applied to the kick (other than any desired aftertouch) it should travel fast enough to beat the keeper from this sort of range.

Step 1: Direct your kicker so they are aiming the ball towards the opposite side of the goal to where the keeper is standing, taking into account that any aftertouch you apply will curve it further away from the keeper's outstretched fingers.

Step 2: Press the **Ⓢ** button to your desired power level (don't press any D-pad direction for now) – you should aim for about two thirds of the power bar, as any more than this can effect the quality of the shot.

Step 3: Just after you strike the ball, apply any desired aftertouch by using the D-pad, otherwise watch it rocket into the net.



SCENARIO #3: LONG RANGE

When you win a free kick more than 30 yards out from the goal and fancy a crack at scoring, then try this method. By holding **↑** on the D-pad when you strike the ball, it will be whacked with considerable force and speed, so pity any poor defender that gets in the way!

Step 1: Direct your kicker so that they're aiming the ball towards the opposite side of the goal to where the keeper is standing. From this range you should be able to curl the ball around the wall rather than going over it, but this also depends on the favoured foot of the kicker and whether they can strike the ball with the outside of the foot or not.

Step 2: Press and hold **↑** on the D-pad and then press the **Ⓢ** button to your desired power level. You should aim for about two thirds of the power bar – any more and your accuracy will suffer greatly.

Step 3: Just after you strike the ball, apply the desired aftertouch by using the D-pad, and bend the ball around the wall and back towards the net.

AT A GLANCE – FREE KICK CONTROLS

When taking any free kick, make sure you judge the distance correctly and use one of the attacking method controls here...

Move	Command
Close range	[Hold] ↓ + Ⓢ
Medium range	Ⓢ
Long range	[Hold] ↑ + Ⓢ
Aftertouch	D-pad ← or →

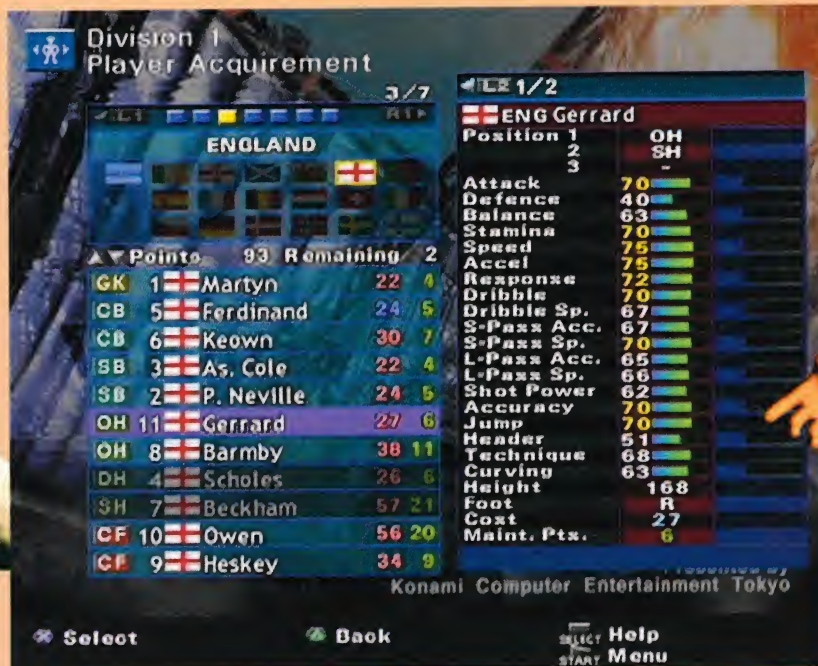


CLASSIC PLAYERS

Although you can buy a selection of past greats in the Master League 'Acquire Players' option (by selecting from any unlocked classic teams), there are still a great many legends who are conspicuous by their absence... until now. By winning the Master League (that's the Division One Championship, not Division Two – you must get promoted first!) you'll unlock a new roster featuring the likes of Matthaus, Ginola, Laudrup, Baggio, Stolchkov, Apsrilla, Vialli, Papin and Klinsmann. There are 33 hidden players in total and they are released in handy batches of 11 each time you manage to win the Master League.

To avoid having to win the Master League three times to unlock the lot, simply save your Master League after the penultimate game and then play the last remaining game to win the trophy and unlock 11 dream players. Then, when the credits have rolled and your options file has updated, load up your old Master League data, play the last game again and automatically unlock the next 11. Doing this a third time will ensure that you unlock every player while only having to play one season (and the last match three times) instead of three full seasons.





THE MASTER LEAGUE

This is where the real action's at in *Pro Evolution Soccer* – a mammoth league set-up in which you take control of one of 33 different club teams from all across the globe and battle it out in ten minute games across two separate divisions. You start in Division Two and your aim for the first season is to finish within the top four to gain automatic promotion to Division One. However, you start with a team of nobodies who couldn't hit a cow's arse with a banjo, so you must win games, earn monetary points and then scout the globe for fresh talent. As you will discover, managing your team becomes a neat little sub-game in itself.

UNDERSTANDING THE POINTS SYSTEM

Normal footie rules apply in the league system, whereby you get three points for a win, one for a draw and none for getting whopped. The total of these will affect your standing in the league and your chances of getting promoted. But what are those other points all about? Simply put, when you win or draw matches, you get points which can be stored up and used to buy new players for your team.

In Division Two, you get Monetary Points (MP) for a win and three for a draw. You will also be awarded bonus MPs for scoring goals (and unlike in previous ISS games, you aren't deducted MPs for conceding goals). So, for example, if you win a match in Division Two with a scoreline of 5-0, you will be awarded six MPs for the win, plus a further five bonus MPs for scoring five goals. If you gain promotion to Division One at the end of the first season (or ever) then the stakes are raised and you'll be awarded 10 MPs for a win and five for a draw (each goal still counts for an additional one MP). You must monitor your MP status at regular intervals, as well as the Player Acquisition menu to check if you have enough points to buy a star player. Be warned though, in this game, the straight transfer fee isn't the end, as you will have to pay player wages from your MP total as well! Read on...

PAYING THE WAGES

When perusing the Player Acquisition menu, each player will have two different numbers next to their name. One is their transfer fee and the other is their wages demands. As you acquire more players, the overall wage bill will be increased – you can monitor this from

the Team Management menu – so you must ensure that you have enough MPs to cover the overall bill at the close of season, otherwise you're likely to go bust.

It's worth noting that you get extra MPs for winning the respective divisions so this may help if you risk folding when you have to settle the bill. You can keep tabs on your team status on the Team Management screen by looking at the three coloured numbers in the top left-hand corner, which are:

White No. Your current MP total
Yellow No. The total MP value of your team
Blue No. The total wage bill

While it's satisfying to assemble an all-star team, the player's wage bill can be crippling, so it may take a few seasons before you have enough stock MPs to be frivolous and not have to worry when the season draws to a close. If a couple of players are sending you over your limit, then be sure to offload them after the penultimate game of the season.

AT A GLANCE – MP MANAGEMENT

This table shows you exactly how many MPs you get for what you do...

Feat	Bonus MPs
Win [Dv2]	6
Win [Dv1]	10
Draw [Dv2]	3
Draw [Dv1]	5
Dv2 Champions	60
Dv1 Champions	120
Highest scorer*	20
Highest assists*	20

* When buying new players from other teams in the Master League, it may be worth taking into account how many goals they have scored and how many assists they have when deciding whether to buy them. Ultimately, players with a high goal tally and a few assists to their name stand more chance of finishing as top scorer/assister and taking the MP bonus at the end of the season.

COMPETITIONS AND REWARDS

There are a whole host of league and cup competitions in *Pro Evolution Soccer*. Here is an at-a-glance guide to what you gain by winning each competition...

Competition	Trophy	Secret
International Cup	Yes	Hidden teams
European Cup	Yes	Hidden teams
Konami Cup	Yes	Hidden stadium
American Cup	Yes	Hidden teams
African Cup	Yes	None
Asian Cup	Yes	None
Master League Dv2	No	None
Master League Dv1	Yes	Hidden players



PLAYER SHOPPER

To help you get started in the Master League transfer system, we've compiled this handy buyers guide. The tables represents the cheapest effective players and the star players who you can dream about one day signing.

5 CHEAP STRIKERS

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/team	Position
Neeskens	20	3	Classic Holland	CF/OH/DF
Silmaen	23	5	Tunisia	CF
Mpenza	24	4	Belgium	CF/OH/SH
Ljunberg	24	5	Sweden	OH/SH/CF
Bassir	24	5	Morocco	CF
Tomassen	24	5	Denmark	CF/OH

5 STAR STRIKERS

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/Team	Position
Salas	38	11	Chile	CF
Van Nistelrooy	38	11	Holland	CF
Shevchenko	48	16	Ukraine	CF/OH/WG
Owen	56	20	England	CF
Batistuta	57	21	Argentina	CF

5 CHEAP MIDFIELDERS

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/Team	Position
Nakata	18	3	Japan subs	OH/DH
Gerrard	23	5	England	DH/SH
Ramirez	24	5	Mexico	SH/SB
Kily Gonzalez	24	5	Argentina	SH
Mendieta	27	7	Spain	SH/SB/DH

5 STAR MIDFIELDERS

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/Team	Position
Giggs	41	12	Wales	WG/OH/CF
Rui Costa	44	14	Portugal	OH/SH
Veron	44	14	Argentina	OH/DH
Djedane	54	19	France	OH
Beckham	57	21	England	SH/OH

5 CHEAP DEFENDERS

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/Team	Position
Al Doukhi	18	3	S.Arabia	SB/SH
Ashley Cole	20	3	England	SB
Ferdinand	24	5	England	CB/SB
Monteiro	30	7	Uruguay	CB
Biscan	23	5	Croatia	DH/CB/OH

5 STAR DEFENDERS

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/Team	Position
Roberto Carlos	43	13	Brazil	SB/SH
Tudor	26	6	Croatia	CB/DH
Maldini	34	9	Italy	SB/CB/SH
Rijkaard	35	10	Classic Holland	CB/LIB/DH
Beckenbauer	54	19	Classic Germany	LIB/DH

AND SOME GOALIES...

Name	Cost	Wages	Country/Team	Position
Kahn	24	5	Germany	GK
Schmeichel	33	9	Denmark	GK
Chilavert	35	10	Paraguay	GK
Al Deayea	22	4	S.Arabia	GK
Carini	24	5	Uruguay	GK

If you can't nail that elusive Sick score in LA, or find the hidden pirate ship on Skater's Island, pay attention – here's everything you didn't know about THPS3 – and more.

SKATETHROUGH

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW...

KEY SKILLS: INTERMEDIATE

Look, we're going to assume a basic degree of competence in the game but, just for the record, we'll recap the key skills here before moving onto the juicy stuff. Don't get ahead of yourself – you can't nail killer combos without implicit mastery of the basics.



1 OLLIES

Quite simply, hold **X** longer to Ollie higher and gain speed. Hold the D-pad forward (**↑**) while ollieing to exit a half-pipe or bank – which is another crucial skill.

2 STOPPING

To stop dead still, hold back until the skater puts their foot on the floor, then rotate left and right using the rear diagonals. If you can't stop and turn in an instant, you can't line up for precision leaps.

3 LOOKING

Stop, and use the right Analogue to look around in full 3D, the perfect way to spot hidden SKATE letters and secret tapes.

4 INTROS

Watch the Intro movies carefully – they drop crucial hints about each objective.

5 TRICKS

As you probably know, every direction of the D-pad activates a different trick. So while **←** and **→** gives you a kickflip, **↵** and **↘** gives you a heelflip, with variations for each of the eight basic D-pad directions. Same goes for grabs and grinds. As a basic rule, use flip tricks on the flat, grabs in the air. You'll never link a grind combo using a grab. Think about it.

6 SPINNING

Hold **L1** or **R1** to spin faster. Simple, but true.

7 SWITCH STANCE

Change your stance by tapping **L1** – Switch Stance tricks earn extra points.

8 NOLLIES

Tap **L2** to move into the Nollie position (perform tricks off the nose of the deck) and earn extra points – vital during killer combos.

9 MANUALS

Quickly tap the D-pad **↑** then **↓**, or **↓** then **↑**, to perform a manual roll or nose wheelie. With this technique, you can link tricks between obstacles, or simply chain together flatland moves. Train yourself to instinctively tap **↑** then **↓** (or vice versa) after every flatland move.

10 REVERTS

Tap **L2** or **R2** immediately after landing a half-pipe or ramp trick to swivel 180, thus allowing you to link into a manual roll and continue the combo – a new feature for THPS3. Again, train yourself to tap **L2** followed quickly by **↑** then **↓** after every ramp move. Practice in Single Session or Training mode.



10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

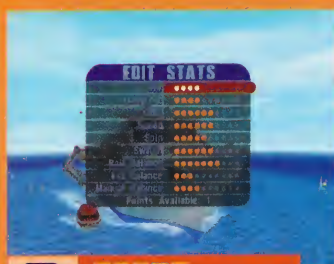
KEY SKILLS: ADVANCED

Now let's move up a gear...

OK, time to assume you're now so familiar with the basic *Pro Skater* skills that you're ollieing in your sleep. Here we'll take you through areas of the game which might seem a little more alien – Manuals, Hidden Moves, Hidden Combos and the like – as well as revealing a few of the game's many secrets...

1 MANUAL ROLL REVERTS

While performing a Manual Roll, you can tap **L2** or **R2** to swivel 180, alternating between regular (right foot on tail) and goofy (left foot on tail) stance. Handy for flatland combos.



2 STATS EDIT

Between Career Mode levels, you can tinker with your stats to match the objectives. So, for example, on a flatland level like Canada, maximise your manual roll ability by sacrificing some hang time or air points. As soon as you begin a Career Mode level, find as many Stat points as you can (there are five per level), to make the remaining tasks easier.



3 TRICKS EDIT

You can check on your Special moves by pausing the game, and edit your trick set at the end of each level. Every time you 100% a level (complete all objectives), you earn a new special trick slot, up to a maximum of ten.



4 AGGREGATE SPECIALS

Set the button combination for each Special Move in a logical order e.g. have one grab move activated by tapping **←** then **↑**, and one flip move activated by tapping the same – so you won't forget your specials during the heat of a combo. We like to set special grinds to **↑** and **↓**, or **↓** and **↑** – you'll always land in a manual roll if you cock up. Keep your special trick assignment logical – 90 degree facing taps for flip moves, for example.



5 DO SPECIALS EARLY

For some bizarre reason, some people only activate special moves when they're high in the air, or long into a grind. Experts activate the move as soon as possible, instantly spinning out of a ramp with a time-consuming 900, or ollieing directly into a Rowley Darkslide. This way, it's possible to slot two or more special grinds onto the average rail. Know the button tap combinations implicitly – eased by aggregation.

6 HIDDEN MOVES

There are a number of hidden moves involving multiple button taps.



A OLLIE TRICK 1

TRICK: Fastplant/Boneless/Beanplant – **↑**, **↑** then **⊗**
USE: Each skater has their own variation e.g. Hawk does the Fastplant, Steamer does the Beanplant. They let you jump higher than a normal ollie, reaching previously inaccessible areas.



B OLLIE TRICK 2

TRICK: No Comply – Tap **↑** and **⊗** simultaneously
USE: Normal ollies don't score points, No Complys do. Very handy for combos.



C GRIND TRICKS

TRICK 1: Nosebluntslide – **↑**, **↑**, **⊗**
TRICK 2: Bluntslide – **↓**, **↓**, **⊗**
USE: Score more points than regular grinds.

7 HIDDEN COMBOS

Certain moves can be tweaked or modified mid-flow to earn some extra points. The system applies to grinds, flips, grabs, inverts, stalls and flatland moves, allowing for much more radical combos than in *THPS2*. Here's the full list:

GRINDS

All hidden combo grinds can be started from a 50/50 (△, no D-pad direction) and modified according to the following rules. Remember that once you commit to your front or back truck, you can't switch back.

STARTING MOVE: 50/50 or NOSESLIDE

MODIFIER:

Nosegrind (↑ + △)
Nosebluntslide (↑, ↑ + △)
Noselide (⊙, ⊙)
Overcrook (⊙, ⊙)
Crooked (↑, ↓ + △)

Simply alternate between Nosebluntslide, Noselide, Crooked and Overcrook grinds for maximum scores.

STARTING MOVE: 50/50 or Tailslide

MODIFIER:

5-0 (↓ + △)
Bluntslide (↓, ↓ + △)
Tailslide (⊙, ⊙)
Feeble (⊙, ⊙)
Smith (↑, ↓ + △)

Alternate between Bluntslide, Tailslide, Feeble and Smith grinds for maximum scores.

FLATLAND MOVES

To begin, make sure your character has a flatland move in his Special trick roster – a street skater like Rodney Mullien has by default. Don't assign Truckstand, To Rail, Casper, Anti-Casper, or Handstand as flatland special moves, as these can be achieved using the Hidden Combo modifiers. You can begin a flatland combo with any flatland move, except the One Wheel Nosemanual and Spring. Oh, and you'll need a full Special bar to get the combo going.

Whatever flatland trick you're performing, you can leap to the following modifiers.

STARTING MOVE:

Any flatland move

MODIFIER:

Anticasper (←, → + △)
Casper (→, ← + △)
Handstand (→, → + ⊙)
Truckstand (→, → + △)

And from the following starting moves:

STARTING MOVE:

Casper, Anticasper and Truckstand

MODIFIER:

Handstand (→, → + ⊙)
Handflip (← + ⊙)
To Rail (←, ← + △)
Rail Flip (← + ⊙)

STARTING MOVE:

Casper

MODIFIER:

Casper Flip (← + ⊙)
[Repeat for maximum effect]

STARTING MOVE:

Truckstand

MODIFIER:

Truckspin (→, → + △)
Truckstand Flip (← + ⊙)

The possibilities are endless. Pop as many variations as you like before returning to the four key moves [Anticasper, Casper, Handstand, and Truckstand] to start over again. Complex, but rewarding.

INVERTS

To perform an Invert, tap two D-pad directions and press w before reaching the lip of ramp.

A full list can be found in the Edit Tricks menu.

Modifiers below:

STARTING MOVE:

Any Invert

MODIFIER:

Gymnast Plant (←, → + △)
Varial Invert to Fakie (→, ← + △)
Invert (→, → + △)
One Foot Invert (←, ← + △)

STALLS

Check the Edit Tricks menu to learn stalls, and modify them as follows:

STARTING MOVE:

Any Stall

MODIFIER:

Disaster (←, → + △)
Axle Stall (→, → + △)
Boneless (←, ← + △)

GRABS

Grabs are activated by pressing e, and score more points the longer they are held. Here are the modifiers:

STARTING MOVE:

KICKFLIP

MODIFIER:

Kickflip to Indy (← + ⊙, → + ⊙)
Kickflip to Grail (← + ⊙, ↑ + ⊙)

FLIPS

Flips are activated by pressing ⊙. The modifiers, then:

STARTING MOVE:

Various

MODIFIER:

Beni Fingerflip (Benihana, ↑ + ⊙)
Double, Triple Kickflip (← + ⊙, ⊙, ⊙)
Double, Triple Heelflip (→ + ⊙, ⊙, ⊙)
Double, Triple Impossible (↑ + ⊙, ⊙, ⊙)



8 THE BALANCE METER

Understand the balance meter for unlimited scoring potential. Balance is cumulative, so if you're tipping forward on a manual roll when you go into a grind, you'll still be tipping forward on the manual roll when you come off the grind. Anticipate the problem, and gently tap the D-pad back (↓) to redress your balance before you land, or vice versa.

Grind tricks use a separate balance meter from manual rolls, operating from left to right, not top to bottom – and are also cumulative. Above all, apply common sense. If a lip arches round a bend, you'll need to tap in the countering direction to keep your grind balance. Balance is best redressed using persistent, minute D-pad taps, not heavy, panicked depressions. So tap, tap, tap, alternating quickly between ↑ and ↓ (or ← and → on a grind) on the D-Pad as required to keep the meter centered. Practice is king.

Score 170



9 THE SCORING SYSTEM

THE FACTS

The score value of each trick depends on its difficulty, so while a basic kickflip's worth 100, a special move like a 900's worth – a remarkable – 6000.

When you link tricks in combination using manual rolls and reverts, the individual trick scores are tallied and multiplied by the number of moves in that chain.

For example, a five trick run, with an individual value of, say, 5000 points would be worth 5000 x 5 = 25,000 points in combination. Geddit? You can boost the individual value of each trick by spinning, holding the grab for longer and performing the move over an acknowledged gap.

Every 180° iteration boosts the value of that trick – so a 900° trick scores 6x the points. Every time you repeat a trick during a combo, its value drops.

WHAT IT MEANS

A good run should be varied, and cover a wide cross-section of terrain. Tricks should never be repeated, and skaters should use as many Special Moves as possible.

Alternate between ramp and flatland tricks, using plenty of grinds to maintain your speed. In Canada, for example, try the following route from the starting position:

1. Kickflip to 50/50 on small rail
2. 180 Heelflip to Nose Grind on adjacent fence, hidden combo into Crooked Grind
3. 180 shove it into Manual Roll, 180 ollie to Nose Wheelie, head towards the

quarter-pipe to perform a 720 Melon Grab, revert, Manual Roll

4. Head towards the downward sloping rails, Rowley Darkslide Special Grind, ollie the rail gap into a Bluntslide, off the rail onto a Manual Roll, off the bank into a 900 Laser Flip... and so on. The only limit is your imagination.

Above all, keep a keen eye on the balance meter, know your Special Moves intimately and alternate between Grind and Aerial tricks. There's no substitute for practice, and never place limits on your own ability – the world's best players land 5,000,000 point combos without breaking into a sweat.

THE TARGET

Set yourself goals. As a novice player, just practice big, multiple rotation grabs and basic Manual Roll-into-Grind combos – 10,000 points would be a good beginner's target. Intermediates should work on linking flatland combos into Ramp Tricks followed by reverts into further flatland moves, aiming for the 50,000 point mark, before breaking the 100,000 barrier.

Practised players should work on introducing Special Moves into their combos, and gain an implicit understanding of the balance meter – take 300,000 points as your target. Veterans should know the course inside out, learn pre-defined 'lines' to maximise use of the scenery and understand the hidden combo system implicitly. One million point combos are perfectly achievable.

10 INSIDE JOKES

In Canada, on the house by the wooden gantry, there's a guy taking a whizz. If you get close enough, you can hear him say: "Wow. It freezes before it hits the water". Keep your eyes peeled for similar comedy moments in each level.

THINK YOU'VE FINISHED?



THINK AGAIN!

PlayStation®2

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SECRET AREAS

CHEATS



Type the following in the Cheat Menu if you really want to spoil the game. You really will, you know.

Backdoor
Unlock all cheats.
Yohomies
Unlock all levels.

You can turn the codes on and off by pausing the game.



FOUNDRY

Unjam the five valves (located on the perimeter walls) to unlock the secret area. It's behind the starting point.

CANADA

Grind the rooftop switch to activate the hidden ramp leading to a huge half-pipe. This is the only route to the hidden tape.

RIO

Break the fence on the outside of the level to unlock the secret area.

SUBURBIA

Once again, this is the route to the secret tape. Help the thin man by finding the axe, and use the quarter-pipe to vault into the secret area. Use the backyard area to leap into the house, or locate the secret rooftop half-pipe.



In true Tony Hawk's tradition, almost every level in the game has a super-secret area. You can spend rewarding hours trying to find them or, if you prefer, you can cheat like a pie-munching mongrel. Your choice, then.



AIRPORT

Ollie the right-hand reception desk and enter the baggage conveyor – you'll emerge, after being X-rayed, outside next to a chopper. Grind its rotor and it'll take off. Familiar, eh?

SKATER ISLAND

There's a gap on the gangway between the two huge bowls, where a pirate's flag is hanging. Ollie across and grind it to unlock the secret area.

LA

Grind all four tremor rails to start the Earthquake and access the highway. Furthermore, grind the curved banks – not forgetting to ollie the small gap – by the tower stairs gap to drop the floor grates and reach a mini half-pipe. Crucially, this will also drop the grates on the rooftop building before the highway – a key location for hidden stat points and decks.

TOKYO

From the starting point, double back on yourself and leap onto the curved rails leading to an upper platform (where the medal ceremony takes place). Steady yourself, and grind the upper left-hand side of the level until you break the advertising sign support cords. It'll crash down revealing the fantastic secret area. To discover a hidden half-pipe, enter the bowl area and leap off the left-hand side onto the observation decks. The half-pipe is on the roof.

SECRETS

To unlock the secrets, you'll need to complete the Career Mode with 100% objectives. (All level goals and Gold in each competition). You'll also unlock real-life skater videos – Rodney Mullen's Is just bloody incredible.

- Darth Maul**
Complete the game with one character.
- Wolverine**
Complete the game with two characters.
- Warehouse Level**
Complete the game with three characters.
- Officer Dick**
Complete the game with four characters.
- Private Carrera**
Complete the game with five characters.
- Burnside Level**
Complete the game with five characters.
- Ollie, the Magic Bum**
Complete the game with seven characters.
- Kelly Slater**
Complete the game with eight characters.
- Roswell Level**
Complete the game with eight characters.
- Demoness**
Complete the game with ten characters.
- Neversoft Eyeball**
Complete the game with 21 characters. Yes, 21.

SPECIALS: THE TOP TEN

The special moves are crucial to making SICK scores, and should be set up using only the highest scoring moves and most memorable key combinations. For example, set grind moves to 8, 2 or 2, 8 taps, so if you make a mistake you'll always land in a Manual Roll. Similarly set up all Aerial moves to begin with, say, a left button press. Our finely honed list of special moves can be found below, optimised for flexibility and maximising scores. You may prefer different moves and/or button presses, but consider this an invaluable starting point. Simply pause the game at any time to access the Edit Tricks menu – and remember, you'll only get the full ten slot Special Trick roster by completing each level 100 percent. Be logical – only assign special grinds to the w button, airs to the e – mirroring the default controls. Above all, never use the same Special twice – repeated moves devalue your combo. Alternate between aerial, flip, flatland and lip tricks for maximum effect.

TRICK	TYPE	SCORE	BUTTON COMBO	NOTES
THE 900	AIR	6500	←, →, ◎	The game's highest scoring Aerial move is dangerously time-consuming so activate it early.
MISTY FLIP	AIR	6500	←, ↓, ◎	High scoring, but less time-consuming than a 900. Useful for small ramps/when you've less speed.
FS 540	AIR	6500	←, ↑, ◎	Similar to Misty Flip. Use to avoid trick repetition in your combos.
STALEFISH BACKFLIP	AIR	6500	←, ↓, ⊞	Again, use for high-scoring variety. Try to sneak in an extra rotation/grab for mega points.
NOLLIE FLIP UNDERFLIP	AIR	6500	←, ↑, ⊞	Quick to perform, easily combined with grabs/rotations when you have less speed/height.
FANDANGLE	AIR	6500	←, →, △	A high-speed grind variation.
ROWLEY DARKSIDE	AIR	6500	↑, ↓, △	High scoring, quick to perform – key combo guarantees landing into Manual Roll.
5-0 OVERTURN	AIR	6500	↓, ↑, △	Quick to perform, good for variety and landing into Switch Manual Rolls.
BIGSPIN FLIP TO TAIL	AIR	6500	←, ↑, △	You only need one Lip Trick, as you can use Hidden Combo modifiers to access the rest.
ANTI CASPAR	AIR	6500	←, ↓, △	Again, you only need one Flatland move as you can use modifiers to access the rest.

THE ULTIMATE HIDDEN COMBO



You now know all about Hidden Combos – subtle button taps that allow you to alter tricks mid-flow. Here we present the ultimate move, see if you can pull this one:

STARTING MOVE:

Truckstand only

MODIFIER:

Truckspin →, →, △

Handstand →, →, +◎

Pogo to Hair Flip

⊞+⊞+△

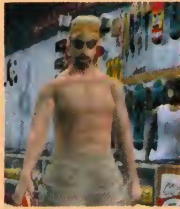
(while spinning)

Rodney Mullen only

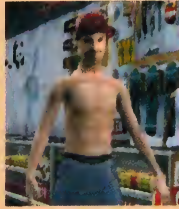
To dazzle your peers and immediate family, tap: ←, ↓, △ for an Anti Caspar (key configuration can be altered to suit your preferences) to →, →, △ to ⊞+⊞+△ (while spinning), for the last word in flatland combos.

SECRET CREATE-A-SKATER CHARACTERS

Type in the following names at the Create-a-skater option to unlock special characters and new customisation features.



Dave Cowling
Type his name.
Nice beer hat.



Issac Burns
Type 'Grass Patch' to get
this short bloke.



Aaron Cammarata
Type 'Eastside'.
A level designer.



Riley Hawk
Type his name.
Son of Tony Hawk.



Spencer Hawk
Type his name. Younger
Son of Tony Hawk.



William Pease
Type his name. Has a
beanie under his 'elmet.



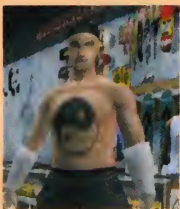
Rastapopolous
Type his name to get the
skate shop guy.



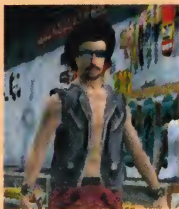
Chris Ward
Type his name.
Like the Green Goblin.



Lisa Davies
Type her name.
Cool duds.



The Pouncer
Type 'Crashcart' for this
big NY feller.



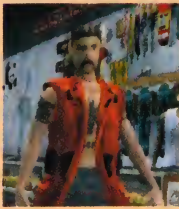
Pimpin Frank
Type his name.



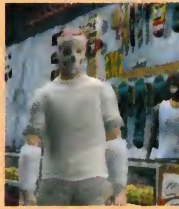
Peter Day
Type 'Pete Day' for bald
ex-pat.



Matt Duncan
Type 'Gorilla' for 7'0"
skater.



Joel Jewett
Type his name to get the
President of Neversoft.



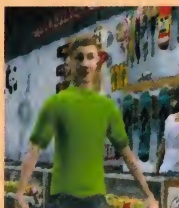
Nolan Nelson
Type 'Brainaters' for a
grim surprise.



Stacey D
Type her name.
Has a great Girl deck.



Mighty Nic
Type in 'Nicole Willick'.
Has a blue panda board.



Benjamin Scott-Pye
Type '062287' for this
14-year-old dude.

LEVEL BREAKDOWN

Even if you haven't mastered the Hidden Combo or balance system, there're a number of easy, high-scoring routes through each level. Find the right spot, and you won't have to work so hard to nail those ever-increasing SICK scores.



FOUNDRY

From the start, loop back on yourself, perform a big aerial move and revert into a manual for another big trick off the upper gantry ledge – a guaranteed 50,000 points. Since the SICK score's low, beginners can use the half-pipe to perform cheap special moves and aerial tricks. Experts should seek out the hidden area (by grinding the five valves) and climb to the top of the circular walkway for a mega grind back down. Alternatively, head for the far side of the starting point, and grind around the perimeter of the level, using all the rails and doubling back using the quarter-pipes.



CANADA

Easy Vert skaters should head straight to the skate park for aerial heaven and simple combos. Street skaters should concentrate on the area in front and below to the right of the starting point, alternating between the huge rails and quarter-pipes. Careful manual balance and grind variation will bring mega results.



RIO

The central arena only good for vert skaters and beginners. Everyone else should string huge grind combos around the outside perimeter of the level, using all the bandstands and traffic rails. For variety, seek out the secret area on the far left side of the starting point, breaking through the cracked wooden fence. A solid 150,000 score should win it – 200,000 to be safe. Try keeping between perimeter rails instead of manual rolling between them for multiplier gap bonuses.



SUBURBIA

Tricky, as the level's flat and spread out. Only experts will be able to balance the great distances. Concentrate on small areas at a time, like the ramps behind the house, the trailer park half-pipes or the ramp park inside the haunted house (found by helping the thin man). There're plenty of grind opportunities in the trailer park, so alternate with aerial moves for max scores.



AIRPORT

Beginners and vert skaters will need to head straight to the underground loading area to make maximum use of the ramps – the first part of the course is for balance freaks and grind kings. For an expert combo from the starting position, double back on yourself, nose grinding the left-hand counter. Manual out to the opposite sofa, and grind for a gap bonus before continuing to the escalator rails as usual. Try to use the rooftop lights for mega grinds, and the boarding area metal detectors as sneaky launch ramps. Use careful balance, special grinds and hidden grind combos for success. Street skaters should avoid the underground area, and perform combos between the final escalator and facing bank to complete the SICK score.



SKATER'S ISLAND

For a good starting combo, Qlitte off the lower level banks onto the rail gantry surrounding the bowls. Grind around for gap bonuses and easy points. Beginners, focus on the bowls for easy aerial specials and rapid scoring. Grind the pirate flag at the back of the half-pipe leading to the bowls to open the secret area – but beware, as this smashes some of the existing lower level quarter-pipes. 170,000 should win it.



LOS ANGELES

This is tough, so take the following route. From the start, double back on yourself and perform a big aerial/flip/grab move. Revert into a manual and grind the curly concrete barrier leading to the right-hand side. Manual towards the downward sloping earthquake rail, special grind, and manual towards the purple circular pool. Either perform a special grind/hidden combo around it, flipping out into a manual and using the opposite facing banks as a half-pipe, or use the purple pool as a launch ramp, pulling a high rotation flip move, landing in a manual and ollieing onto the half-pipe into a lip trick before continuing the combo.



TOKYO

A 200,000 point score should do it, so play safe – you can't afford to waste time by bailing. Use the large banks by the starting point for a huge aerial move, revert manual rolling into a simple high-scoring aerial special move on the opposite bank, like a FS 540. The centre of the level's a bit of a minefield, so head directly to the bowls on the far side for easy points. Alternatively, climb the gangway to grind the long rails on the central platform, mixing up special grinds between flips and manual rolls. Time is the only enemy, so try not to panic or over-stretch your abilities.



CRUISE SHIP

Despite the 500,000 point target, this is much easier than LA. For a start, drain the pool – by grinding the fat white pipe with circular lever at the rear of the deck – for some easy aerial combos. Work your way down to the rear of the ship for a convenient half-pipe, perfect for cheap aerial special combos. Grind kings should proceed from the rear to the right-hand side, using special grinds and flips to get high onto the awnings for relatively simple 100,000 point combos. The greenhouse area is a prime-scoring zone, with multi-layers of sprinkler rails ripe for special grinds and hidden combos, with perfect half-pipe banks below.

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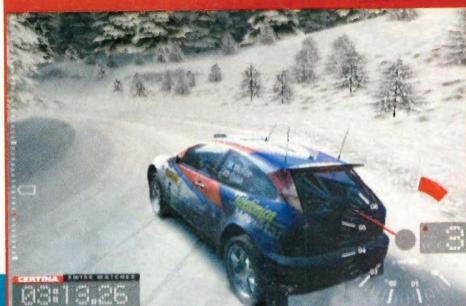
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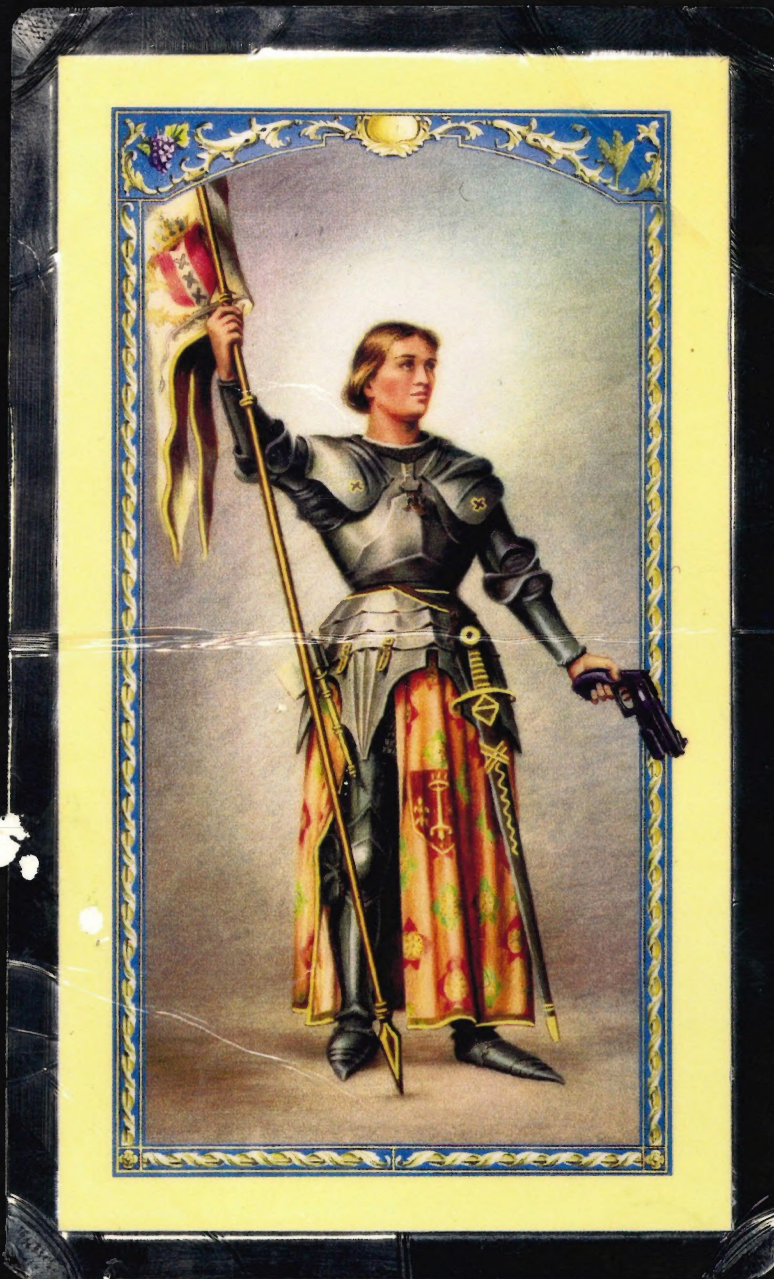
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